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THE

TRUE HISTORY

OF

MOSES, AARON, JOSHUA,

AND OTHERS,

DEDUCED FROM A REVIEW OF THE BIBLE.

ALSO,

REMARKS ON THE MORALS OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT, AND SOME OF THE ANCIENT PHILOSOPHERS.

By J. M. DORSEY.

"It is easier to believe than to be *scientifically* instructed."—*Locke.*

"He who wishes to know the truth, will require facts and good reasoning, as evidence whereon to ground his belief; but he who is willing to believe that which is most convenient, will receive more equivocal evidence."

Condorcet, in his Life of Voltaire, says, "Though it be less glorious to combat vulgar errors than teach new truths to sages, it is necessary, in order to break the bonds of reason and open the road to truth, to prefer utility to fame."

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TO THE READER.

In reviewing what is called the "Old Testament," and its offspring, the "New Testament," I treat of these books as they are given to the mass of the people. I am aware that the learned are in a continual uproar, and have been for at least fifteen hundred years, contending as to when the different books contained in these two Testaments were written; by whom written; and whether the writers of them were or were not divinely inspired; and though the laboring classes have paid millions on millions of dollars, and millions of dollars' worth of property to these wranglers, (for they are generally clergymen,) they are much further from being agreed now than they were a thousand years ago. But in one thing they have generally agreed — that is, in deceiving and swindling the mass of the people.

"What makes all doctrines plain and clear?
Why, twice two hundred pounds a year."

Many learned men say that none of the books of the Old Testament, as we now have them, were written until after the Jews returned from their captivity; and of course were not written by the persons

whose names they bear. When their city was taken, it was entirely destroyed; and as their conquerors were pagans, it is supposed that, of course, they burned all the Jewish writings. And as the Jews that were not slaughtered were carried to Babylon, and kept two generations, seventy years, in slavery, if any of them had secretly taken any writings with them, it would have been nearly impossible for slaves to have kept those writings secret during two generations; and strong corroborative evidence is, that the principal books relate things that occurred after their reputed authors were dead. Most of the learned Jews, I believe, attribute the Pentateuch, as we now have it, to Ezra, but say that he was divinely inspired, and of course wrote the same as Moses had written it, except adding some explanations that were necessary to enable the people of his day to understand the text as written by Moses. These disputes and speculations do well enough to employ the learned; they give them an opportunity to exhibit their learning to the gaze of the world and wonder of the ignorant, but will be of no real service to mankind, for these learned disputants will never agree.

I have no hesitation in saying that every book of the Pentateuch, generally said to have been written by Moses, and most of the books written by his successors, that are imbodied in the Old Testament, carry on their face undeniable proof of their falsehood; so that the strongest proof against any of them is the book itself. One of the most learned and orthodox defenders of the Christian canon, Rev.

Jeremiah Jones, published "A new and full Method of settling the Canonical Authority of the New Testament," in three volumes, printed at Oxford, 1798, at the University press. In vol. i. p. 70–85, he sets down the following rules of decision: —

That book is apocryphal which contains any contradictions;

Or, any histories contrary to those known to be true;

Or, any doctrines contrary to those known to be true;

Or, relations ludicrous, trifling, fabulous, or silly;

Or, which mentions facts that occurred later than the time of the author to whom it is ascribed;

Or, whose style is manifestly different from the known style of its supposed author;

Or, which is written in an idiom or dialect different from that of the author to whom it is ascribed, or different from the idiom of his country;

Or, that manifests a disposition different from the known disposition of the supposed author;

Or, that advances doctrines and opinions contrary to the known doctrines and opinions of the author.

Respecting these rules, the late talented and learned Dr. Cooper, of South Carolina, said, "To all these criteria I fully assent, adding these rules: That evidence in support of a narrative must be strong in proportion to the antecedent improbability of the fact related; a common occurrence is rendered probable by common testimony; an uncommon occurrence demands much stronger evidence to establish it." I, also, fully assent to these rules, including the very

just and reasonable ones added by Dr. Cooper, and add, first, That that book which records transactions, as having been done, that are unjust, tyrannical, or cruel, and states that those acts were done by, or by the command of, or by the approbation of, a wise and good being, — be that being called Man, Angel, Lord, or God, — that book is false, beyond the possibility of a reasonable doubt. Second, That that book whose principal statements, doctrines, or opinions are founded on the statements, doctrines, or opinions of a false book, or books, is also false. The whole of these rules are as applicable to the books of the Old Testament, and to any other book, as they are to the books of the New Testament.

We have a great variety of declarations continually put forth from the pulpits of the different religious denominations of our country stating the deplorable condition of those they call idolaters, — worshippers, they say, of false gods, — and urging the people to contribute money liberally; which money, they say, will enable their missionaries to bring those idolaters to the knowledge of the "true God." And who is this "true God" that these pulpit gentry are so anxious to introduce to the acquaintance of every people? whose introduction, so far as it has been made, has cost such enormous amounts of treasure, and of human blood, and has produced so much injustice, cruelty, and human misery? and the expense of keeping up and extending this acquaintance is sought to be enlarged by a continual cry from the pulpits of Give, give, give? Again: who is this God? Why, it is Moses's, or the Bible

God. Why are these pulpit gentry so extremely anxious to uphold and extend the dominion of that God? Because he, as far as he can, and they, always willing to assist him, labor incessantly to augment the power and wealth of tyrants and clergy, and to trample under foot the rights and interest of every other member of the human family. Of the truth of this, I think any person who will candidly examine the history of that God, as recorded by Moses, (his maker,) will be fully convinced: but more presently.

It is impossible for a finite being to really know or comprehend any thing with respect to an infinite. We say that space is infinite in extent, not because we understand or comprehend what we say, but because of our incapacity to set bounds thereto; for let us stretch our imagination to its greatest possible extent, say millions of millions of miles in every direction, and imagine the boundary there — immediately arises the question, What is beyond that supposed boundary? Our only answer is, Space. The same reasoning applies to our comprehension of the eternity of time: we send our imagination back millions on millions of years, if we can keep it on the track, and when it sinks under the weight of inquiry, this question starts up before us, Have you so far discarded reason as to suppose that there ever was a time when there was no time? We then start forward in our inquiry; but we are soon met by this query, Has common sense so little check on your prejudices, imbibed from a depraved education, that they can lead you to imagine that there ever will be

a time when there will be no time? Time, Space, and Matter are the fundamental elements of the Universe. We have shown, as far as finite can comprehend infinite, that time and space are coextensive, and coeternal; that they have existed eternally, and eternally will exist; and of course are not the effect of any cause, for a cause must be older than its effect. So far as we can ascertain there is no such thing in nature as a vacuum; every part of space that we can examine is filled with matter; and not one particle of matter can we destroy. Then, reasoning from what we know of matter to what we do not know of it, we say, As matter cannot be annihilated, it must exist eternally; that that which will exist eternally must have eternally existed; for that which had a beginning must have an ending — that which has one end assuredly has two ends.

Again: as every part of space which we can examine is occupied by matter, we, therefore, infer that those parts which we cannot examine are so occupied; and, therefore, that matter is coextensive with space; and if coextensive, necessarily coeternal; for if matter ever had a beginning, be its fecundity ever so great, and the growth of its productions ever so rapid, it never can fill space. Then we are compelled to acknowledge that the fundamental elements of the Universe are eternal in their existence and extent, because we feel that it is impossible to set, or even imagine, bounds to time, space, and matter beyond which they may not go. It is quite different when we speak of an infinite God; we are compelled to associate parts, and of course locality, with a wise

and powerful being; we would not say that time is wise and powerful; we would not say that space is wise and powerful; nor would we say that matter, in all its ramifications and extent, is wise and powerful. But there is no difficulty in determining the real character of Moses's God, as his principal historians have given his general movements and transactions. According to their statements he was evidently a local being; for Moses had him at one time on Mount Sinai, and set bounds around him as the exhibiters of wild beasts do; and like them cautioned the people not to go too near, fearing that his God would break over the bounds set, and would kill them. At other times he had him seated on a gold seat, with a gold image on each side of him; and at other times in other localities. They represent him not only circumscribed in extent, but limited in power; deficient in wisdom and goodness; extremely unjust and tyrannical. He is, therefore, a false God; of course those who worship him are idolaters. The truth of this will, I think, be manifest to any person who will read attentively the pages of this book.

One day in seven, it matters not whether it be the first or the seventh, as a holiday, is a good arrangement, if established by law for the objects that would make it valuable; that is, to prevent children and dependents being over-worked; and also to give the members of society generally time for mutual improvement. And if there were a good lecture delivered, in suitable districts, every forenoon of each holiday, on some natural science, such lectures would

soon be generally and cheerfully attended; for the aged and the youth would readily discover that they were gaining real knowledge, and the expense would be less than one half what they now pay for hypocritical *know-nothing* sermons. The holiday afternoons might be passed off in innocent amusements and social intercourse. The same civil laws would restrain the vicious on such days as on other days.

PROEMIAL QUOTATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS.

"Man is born with the faculty of receiving sensations. In those which he receives, he is capable of perceiving and distinguishing the simple sensations of which they are composed. He can retain, recognize, combine them; he can preserve or recall them to his memory; he can compare their different combinations; he can ascertain what they possess in common, and what characterizes each: lastly, he can affix signs to all these objects, the better to know them, and the more easily to form from them new combinations. This faculty is developed in him by the action of external objects, that is, by the presence of certain complex sensations, the constancy of which, whether in their identical whole, or in the laws of their change, is independent of himself. It is also exercised by communication with other similarly-organized individuals, and by all the artificial means, which, from the first development of this faculty, men have succeeded in inventing. Sensations

are accompanied with pleasure or pain, and man has the further faculty of converting these momentary impressions into durable sentiments of a corresponding nature, and of experiencing these sensations either at the sight or recollection of the pleasure or pain of beings sensitive like himself. And from this faculty, united with that of forming and combining ideas, arise between him and his fellow-creatures the ties of interest and duty; to which nature has affixed the most exquisite portion of our felicity, and the most poignant of our sufferings." — *John Anthony Nicholas Caritat, Marquis de Condorcet.*

We are indebted to Aristotle for the following very important and undeniable truth: "All our ideas originate in our sensations." Condillac expresses the same thing in the following words: "We distinguish as many species of ideas as we distinguish different sensations; and these ideas are either actual sensations or they are but a remembrance of the sensations we have had."

O, hail that Day! — "When Reason's voice,
Loud as the voice of Nature, shall have waked
The nations; and mankind perceive that vice
Is discord, war, and misery; that virtue
Is peace, and happiness, and harmony;
When man's maturer nature shall disdain
The plaything of its childhood; kingly glare
Will lose its power to dazzle; its authority
Will silently pass by; the gorgeous throne
Shall stand unnoticed in the regal hall,
Fast falling to decay; whilst falsehood's trade
Shall be as hateful and unprofitable
As that of truth is now." — *Percy Bysshe Shelley.*

Every person desirous of ascertaining the truth on any subject, so far as truth can be known on that subject, will, I think, receive great assistance by attending to the following instructions of Mr. Locke: —

"Reading is for the improvement of the understanding. The improvement of the understanding is for two ends: first, for our own increase of knowledge; second, to enable us to deliver and make out that knowledge to others. I hope it will not be thought arrogance to say, that perhaps we should make greater progress in the discovery of rational and contemplative knowledge if we sought it at the fountain, — in the contemplation of things themselves, — and made use rather of our own thoughts than other men's to find it; for I think we may as rationally hope to see with other men's eyes as to know by other men's understandings. So much as we ourselves consider and comprehend of truth and reason, so much we possess of real, true knowledge. The floating of other men's opinions in our brains makes us not a jot the more knowing, though they happen to be true. What in them was science, is in us but opiniatrety, whilst we give our assent only to reverend names, and do not, as they did, employ our own reason to understand those truths which gave them reputation. Aristotle was certainly a knowing man; but nobody ever thought him so, because he blindly embraced, or confidently vented, the opinions of others. And if the taking up another's principles, without examining them, made not him a philosopher, I suppose it will hardly make any body else so. In science, every one has

as much as he really knows and comprehends; what he believes only, and takes upon trust, are but shreds, which, however well in the whole piece, make no considerable addition to his stock who gathers them. Such borrowed wealth, like fairy money, though it were gold in the hand from which he received it, will be but leaves and dust when it comes to use. How many men have no other ground for their tenets than the supposed honesty, or learning, or number of those of the same profession! As if honest or bookish men could not err, or truth were to be established by the vote of the multitude! Yet this, with most men, serves the turn. All men are liable to error, and most are, in many points, by passion or interest, under temptation to it. If we could but see the secret motives that influenced the men of name and learning in the world, and the leaders of parties, we would not always find that it was the embracing of truth, for its own sake, that made them espouse the doctrines they owned and maintained. This, at least, is certain: there is not an opinion so absurd which a man may not receive upon this ground. There is no error to be named which has not had its professors; and a man shall never want crooked paths to walk in if he thinks that he is in the straight way wherever he has the footsteps of others to follow."

This great and good man has herein given good advice, and a correct view of our duty — that is, we ought to use our reason and judgment in all inquiries and examinations between truth and error. But very different is the language of many of the learned, and

the would-be-thought learned, both of the present age and of past ages. Setting themselves up as oracles, they declare that the unlearned classes of society, and even the learned, unless they have been initiated into the mysteries of the Vatican, are quite incapable of discharging, or even knowing, their duties, without the direction and aid of this self-constituted umpire between man and his duty to himself and to society. They also declare that there are some things too sacred to be investigated, or even to be questioned. These things, generally, are of the same category as the Indian philosopher's theory of the earth. "The earth," said that wise man, "is supported on the back of a very large elephant." "What does the elephant stand on?" inquired one of his students. "The elephant," replied the learned philosopher, "stands on the back of an enormous large tortoise." "And what supports the tortoise?" inquired the student. "Stop, stop," said the philosopher, assuming a solemn countenance, "that is a sacred mystery — too sacred to be questioned." My reason teaches me that there is not, never has been, nor never will be, any thing too sacred for man to investigate, as far as his faculties will enable him; and to draw such deductions therefrom as his reason and judgment, candidly exercised, shall enable him to arrive at, without heeding the opinions or declarations of others any further than to take such opinions and declarations into his investigation, and give them as much weight, in his deductions and decisions, as he shall think them entitled to. In any investigation, inquiry, or review which I shall undertake, I

shall use the greatest freedom consistent with candor and correct reason — no matter how sacred the things or personages involved may be considered.

The review and investigation herein undertaken, I am aware, will be very unpopular — will be treated by some with pretended contempt, and by others with great bitterness; yet even with these, one of my main objects will be accomplished in part, which is, to get persons to examine and to think; for wherever that is done, truth will be the gainer. I am very happily situated to what the first advocates of self-government were; and to their generous self-sacrifice do I owe now my freedom and happiness. They not only had to brave contempt and ill language, but they knew that loss of life and fortune, and the ruin of their families, were the forfeiture, if those they were opposing should by any chance get them into their power. In the present case the great cry will be, "Anarchy! The natural passions of mankind, which are evil continually, will be let loose; it is necessary to hold a stiff curb on the natural depravity of man," &c. Dr. Young, who, I suspect, was a learned, good man, but superstitious, bigoted, and enthusiastic, in making comments on some writings of Lord Bolingbroke, about one hundred years ago, said, —

"As to God, (they say,) the natural religion commands us to think worthily, and speak reverently, of him; but as some have thought churches derogatory to the notions of an Omnipresent Being, so formal prayers and solemn services are no way necessary to a Being Omniscient. They present him (if with any) with a more sublime and philosophical devotion,

stripped of all externals, invisible as the Deity himself, and, indeed, as incomprehensible to the multitude, whose religion, like themselves, must have a body as well as a soul, or it will evaporate into nothing."

And you have made a body for your religion, consisting of costly buildings, built by the "multitude," and a dogmatical clergy; which clergy will, if well paid for it, condescend to officiate in the costly buildings, and say long prayers for the benefit of the vulgar. This same Dr. Young, in a letter to a friend on another subject, "Life's Review," makes some excellent remarks, and gives some very wholesome advice; among others, the following: —

"There is nothing of which men are more liberal than their good advice, be their stock ever so small, because it seems to carry in it an intimation of our own influence, importance, or worth. We (for you approved it — we, I say) have bestowed abundance of it on our centaurs, which, I fear, will bring us in but little thanks. Let us, therefore, return from abroad, come to ourselves, and see if our export of wisdom may not be wanted at home. We have censured the aged; are we not such ourselves? Is there no folly to be found but at assemblies and masquerades? or is folly not folly because it hits our own taste? Let us lay the line to our own conduct; let us drop foreign ware, and put ourselves into the scale. Yes, my friend; let us make a short visit to our former selves. They are, indeed, great strangers, nor much to be liked; yet it is a visit all should make who wish well to the future life."

It is known that the first advocates of self-government were censured and abused as persons wishing to favor anarchy; about to let loose the depraved passions of mankind, which, it was said, would destroy all order, justice, and morality. Well, the people established self-government; and it cannot be successfully controverted but that we have better order, more justice, and, at least, as sound morality as when we were governed by a king. So we gained much, besides the great saving in expense, and lost nothing, by getting rid of the government of the king. And I am convinced that we would gain much, besides the abolition of the expense of the system, by getting rid of the influence of the clergy; for it is through the influence of the clergy that our children are taught falsehood and hypocrisy from their cradle to their grave. The child that is taught to say, "I believe," in matters which it does not understand, is taught to lie. The child that is taught to pray, before it has examined, reflected, and determined within its own mind whether praying is or is not necessary, is taught to act the hypocrite. Thus are our children taught lying and hypocrisy before they know the difference between good and evil; and then their vices are charged to the "depravity of human nature," instead of being charged to a depraved education.

> "Condemned to sacrifice his childish years
> To babbling ignorance and empty fears."
>
> *Matthew Prior.*

All religions eschew reason; and as soon as Christianity became seated in power, one of its most prom-

inent features was contempt of human sciences, with sometimes an inveterate persecution of them. Of course, wherever it became firmly established, the mass of the people degenerated in both knowledge and morals; and in the fourteenth century, the most degrading ignorance, vice, and tyranny overshadowed and blasted reason, and with it the natural justice and virtue of mankind wherever Christianity ruled. Education being entirely under the control of the clergy, the minds of the children were burdened with religious prejudices, and reason defamed and excluded. Even in the nineteenth century the teachers of geology have been assailed and abused by the clergy, because their teachings are considered contrary to the Mosaic record; but finding that the truths of geology can be no longer successfully resisted, they now turn round and declare that these truths are confirmatory evidence of the genuineness of their Scriptures. Previous to the sixteenth century, wherever Christianity was extended, the inhabitants of the country were not treated like human beings, because they were not Christians. They (the Christians) received that principle legitimately from Moses. It is said that the bones of five millions of human beings were strewed over the lands seized in the new world by the Spaniards and the Portuguese. Such is the morality of religion.

Luther exposed the impositions of Popery, but adhered to the superstitions which had, with a little corruption, enabled the pope and his minions to practise those impositions on the people; so that those whom he in some measure freed from Popish

corruption still retained their superstitions, which occasioned them to divide into a number of sects of different religious dogmas, who were as intolerant as the Papists. They not only persecuted the Catholics, but they persecuted each other most intolerably. This conduct in those self-styled reformers was full assurance to every talented liberal person, and to all who, even in a small degree, exercised their reason, that there would be but little added to the knowledge and interest of society by favoring these fanatics. There were many talented men, though scattered over large countries, that rejected those superstitions, and all modes of formal worship, being governed by reason. These men considered all religions as the inventions of unprincipled and dishonest men, to enable the interpreters thereof to tyrannize over and rob the people. These reasonably-minded men were tyrannically treated by both Catholics and Protestants, which compelled them to guard their opinions by secrecy. This state of society, perhaps, originated "secret societies," which, under such circumstances, were desirable, being then some small protection to justice and virtue ; but in the present state of civil society, particularly in the United States, they are not only useless, but absolutely injurious — and so are all sectarian societies ; because a majority of the members of each of these societies will favor a person of their own society in preference to one of greater merit who is not a member thereof, thus dividing mankind into clans, whereas they ought to be considered as one family, and treated as such, the only distinction and preference to be in proportion

to the individual's wisdom, virtue, and usefulness in general society. Moreover, these secret societies, and sect societies, are very often corrupters of politics, which, of all things, ought to be held most sacred in a free country.

At last some noble spirits had the boldness to declare that all authority originates in the people; that the rulers, magistrates, &c., of every function and power, are the agents of the people, and not their masters; that the people have the right to abrogate any or all power in their agents whenever the public good requires it. Althusius, Languet, Harrington, Needham, &c., investigated and boldly professed these opinions; and tyrants, temporal and spiritual, with all their abominable injustice and cruelty, could never wholly smother these correct principles; they would once in a while break out; and to these outbreaks, and to a favorable situation for the reception of their influence, did the Americans owe their revolution; and to that revolution, and a band of real noblemen, do we owe our liberty.

"Hath Nature's soul,
That formed the world so beautiful, that spread
Earth's lap with plenty, and life's smallest chord
Strung to unchanging unison, that gave
The happy birds their dwelling in the grove,
That yielded to the wanderers of the deep
The lovely silence of the unfathomed main,
And filled the meanest worm that crawls in dust
With spirit, thought, and love, on Man alone,
Partial in causeless malice, wantonly
Heaped ruin, vice, and slavery? his soul
Blasted with withering curses? placed afar
The meteor-happiness that shuns his grasp?

But serving on the frightful gulf to glare,
Rent wide beneath his footsteps ?
Nature ! — No !
Kings, priests, and statesmen blast the human flower,
Even in its tender bud ; their influence darts
Like subtle poison through the bloodless veins
Of desolate society. The child,
Ere he can lisp his mother's sacred name,
Swells with the unnatural pride of crime, and lifts
His baby sword even in a hero's mood ;
His infant arm becomes the bloodiest scourge
Of devastated earth ; while specious names,
Learned in soft childhood's unsuspecting hour,
Serve as the sophisms with which manhood dims
Bright reason's ray, and sanctifies the sword
Uplifted to shed a brother's innocent blood.
Let priest-led slaves cease to proclaim that man
Inherits vice and misery, when force
And falsehood hang even o'er the cradled babe,
Stifling with rudest grasp all natural good."

Percy Bysshe Shelley.

In order to ascertain whether the Hebrew writings called *Bible*, or *Old Testament*, and the writings founded thereon, and imbodied in the book called the *New Testament*, were or were not written by persons inspired by an infinitely wise, infinitely powerful, and infinitely good being so to write, I consider it only necessary to review, and candidly scrutinize, the writings of Moses ; for if they be found such as to evince that they were not dictated by such infinite being, then will the whole of these writings be divested of their supposed divine authority ; for they are all founded on the writings of Moses.

RELIGIOUS OPINIONS.

One of the strongest proofs against the divinity of these writings — except those contained in the writings — is, the innumerable sects and opinions that have been founded on them, and the hatred, defamation, and persecution engendered between the professors, which have caused more bloodshed, murder, and rapine than every thing else that has occurred in the same time. Even now, in the middle of the nineteenth century, and in the free and enlightened United States, there are frequently circumstances taking place which clearly evince that if our mild political institutions did not come in between the different theological sects, they would soon be cutting each other's throats. One circumstance which has taken place quite recently, it being a very solemn occasion, will show the bitter feeling which exists between them : —

"The columns of the Delaware County (Pennsylvania) Republican have been the arena for a most extraordinary controversy for some weeks past. The facts which led to the discussion, so far as we can gather them, are these : The burying ground attached to the Episcopal Church at the village of Chester, Pennsylvania, has been used, from time immemorial, as a place of sepulture by families of various religious denominations, and of no denomination. A Presbyterian minister in that vicinity, having lost a family connection by death, desired that the burial should take place in this church-

yard, and the usual arrangements were accordingly made — the family of the deceased, through this minister, having invited another minister to officiate on the occasion. Some religious services having been held at the house, the procession, led by the two ministers, started for the grave. On reaching the gate of the churchyard, however, they were met by the Episcopal rector, with gown and prayer book, ready to perform the Episcopal funeral service. The Presbyterian minister, who was connected with the deceased, thinking there had been, probably, a misunderstanding, politely informed the rector that the family had engaged the services of the clerical brother who had come with the procession. The rector, however, as it turned out, had not misapprehended the true state of the case. He knew all about it, and was determined that a 'dissenting' minister should not intrude upon his premises. The friend of the deceased remonstrated; but the rector would not relent. As a compromise measure, we believe, he suggested, that after he had performed his funeral service, the 'dissenting' brethren could proceed with what they had to say, if so disposed; but read the service he would. As the circumstances seemed to render further resistance impracticable, the friends of the deceased had to yield, and the rector carried his point by conducting the burial in defiance of the wishes and arrangement of the family and friends! The occurrence, as may be imagined, excited no little sensation, and the rector from his pulpit publicly defended his course. The newspaper strictures on his conduct, which are very severe,

seem to be from the pen of one who was born and brought up in the Episcopal church. We publish the incident as one of the 'signs of the times.' Our Episcopal brethren are taking higher ground, and it is not difficult to conjecture whereunto such things may grow. But a short time since, as we understand, this rector was a Low Churchman." — *Presbyterian.*

THE CHURCH.

PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH. — BY REV. S. H. COX, JR.

"Thus onward moves the Church of God;
'Tis wondrous in our eyes;
It flourisheth, though strong opposed,
As palm trees pressed do rise.
Ye young cadets, enlisted for the prize,
Upon whose brow is set the cross,
In the strength of God arise;
Bear ye the fruits of academic lore;
Hasten with them your Lord to greet;
O, throw your laurels at the Savior's feet.
We are the elect of God;
And we are marching now the desert through,
Fair Canaan's fields in view,
As Israel of yore,
Our Joshua before.
Strong heroes lead the van:
Be true of heart, each man;
O, as ye move along,
For Christ, and for his holy Church,
Let your young nerves be strong;
Let the red-cross banner wave;
Underneath its folds be brave.
Through might of Him, the great 'I am,'
Onward, and wear the palm!"

Episcopal Recorder, June 29, 1844.

CHRISTIANITY.

Some years ago I heard Thomas Belsham, D. D., preach a sermon in London to young people, in which he strongly and eloquently urged upon men the claims of Christianity. At the close of his sermon he observed, "But do not mistake me. I do not mean to say you will not be saved if you reject Christianity. I believe the man who honestly rejects it is equally safe with the man who honestly receives it. I only regret that you lose such a motive to virtue." I mentioned this to another Unitarian minister, William Johnson Fox, who said it was perfectly correct, only brother Belsham had too much candor. Dr. Belsham, in answering Dr. John Pye Smith's "Person of Christ," observed, that though the actions of Christ were unimpeachable, it did not follow but that he was a peccable being. In contrast with this I would give you a bit of old divinity, which is too good to be lost: —

> "Said Justice, 'Man, I'd fain know what you weigh:
> If weight, I spare you; if too light, I slay.'
> Man leaped the scale. It mounted. 'On my word,'
> Said Justice, 'less than nothing; where's my sword?'
> Virtue was there — her added weight would try;
> The scale, unsunk, still kicked the beam on high.
> Mercy, the whitest dove that ever flew,
> From Calvary fetched a sprig of crimson hue;
> Aloft it sent the scale on t'other side;
> Man smiled, and Justice owned, 'I'm satisfied.'"
>
> *The Presbyterian*, Sept. 17, 1853.

These extracts, being movements and opinions of

persons now living, show very clearly that the superstition, fanaticism, and zealous persecution which a few ages ago dragged men and women to the block and to the stake, are now smouldering under our mild and just political institutions, ready to break out upon the peace and happiness of society whenever they can get vent. "We are the elect of God;" "Let the red-cross banner wave;" "Man leaped the scale," and though he had Virtue in with him, they weighed nothing; but a small sprig, of crimson hue, was full weight, and gave ample satisfaction. This is an unequivocal declaration that virtue is of no worth in the estimation of their God; that nothing can appease his wrath but blood: and no person who has a reasoning mind can be surprised at that, when he reflects that the God which these fanatics worship is the "Great I am," or Moses's God — a God of injustice and blood. Dr. Belsham's declaration, "I believe the man who honestly rejects it [Christianity] is equally safe with the man who honestly receives it," was considered by his clerical brethren not fit for the public ear; it was, by one who declared it to be true, considered too candid. And why too candid? Because it places honesty on an equality with faith. And well do the clergy know, that if honesty, justice, and virtue — all three together — be generally acknowledged to be equal to belief and faith, the clerical trade will soon be spoiled, and they will have to seek some other employment to make a living; and they may not all find as easy and as profitable situations as they now have.

Dr. Watts, in his Divine Songs for Children, says, —

"Not more than others I deserve,
Yet God has given me more;
For I have food, while others starve,
And beg from door to door."

Here is a positive declaration that God is unjust; that he is partial: but recollect—it was Moses's God that Dr. Watts worshipped.

Now let me entreat every honest person to reflect, and put to his own reason this question: Is it possible, while such opinions and declarations are beat into the minds of our children from their infancy by threats of eternal punishment, or the promise of great rewards, that our community can become a moral community?

If mankind are, as theologians tell us they are, by nature depraved and vicious, then deplorable indeed is their condition. Far better would it have been if they had never had an existence; for if such be the case, there can be no hope of improvement. But convinced I am that such is not their condition by nature, but that they are such by tyrannical treatment and hypocritical education; and if these deleterious influences are removed from them, they are susceptible of continual and unlimited improvement. But yet more horribly deplorable is their situation, if, as theologians declare, the greater part (or if any of them) are doomed to eternal pain in an endless life! Reflect on this position, and say whether such can be the arrangement of an infinitely-wise, infinitely-powerful, and infinitely-good Being! Suppose but one of a hundred, or but one of a thousand, is finally doomed to endless torments; no one knows but that

he or she may be the unfortunate one; or if, as some theologians pretend, each one that will go to a place of happiness has internal evidence thereof, what is the situation of those who have not that evidence? And those who say that they have internal evidence of their own safety, do not know but that father, mother, brother, sister, child, or grandchild may be the unhappy one; and let their own situation be what it may, can they be truly happy under such circumstances?

Quite recently, in conversation with a gentleman on these subjects, he observed, "If a child of mine is sent to hell, I wish to go there too." And the thought of his child being so situated filled his eyes with tears, and choked his utterance. In that case, benevolent human nature rose preëminently above selfish, degrading theology. None but the just and virtuous can be truly happy; and I cannot conceive that even they can be so, if they know that there is a fellow-being extremely miserable. It is not at all to be wondered at that this miserable system, theology, causes thousands every year to become lunatics. I was intimately acquainted with a family, the old lady of which was extremely religious; almost her entire conversation, to old and young, was on that subject. I had some business with the old gentleman, her husband, and went to see him. He was not at home. The old lady gave me a considerable lecture on religion, but very mild. I felt thankful to the old lady, for I considered that she honestly expressed her views. Her husband was a member of the same church, but very liberal, not at all enthusi-

astic. After a time the old lady died, and soon after the old gentleman quit the church. Some time after these circumstances I was at a village about twelve miles from the one I lived in. Mr. H., the above old gentleman, was there, and we started home together, for we were near neighbors. In the course of our journey Mr. H. said that he had a number of years been a member of such a church; that there were things attached to belief in that church some of which he did not understand, and others that he could not believe; but that his wife, being a very zealous member, would have been very unhappy if he had continued out of the church; that he considered peace and happiness at home most essential for the proper management of a family.

I readily believed the statements of Mr. H., because of corroborative evidence. There was a Masonic Lodge which held its meetings in the village in which I lived, about a mile from Mr. H.'s residence. He was said to be a Mason, but did not attend their meetings. The report in the neighborhood was, that Mrs. H. was very much opposed to Freemasonry, so much so that she wished Mr. H. not to attend their meetings. About this time a learned young gentleman of good talents came from Philadelphia and became the preacher in the church to which Mr. and Mrs. H. belonged. After a while it came out that Mr. C., the preacher, was a Freemason. Some one told Mrs. H. She expressed great surprise; for she considered Mr. C. a young man of great piety and correct habits. She concluded, therefore, that if Mr. C. was a Mason, Masonry could not

be so bad a thing as she had thought it to be; and she was willing that Mr. H. should attend their meetings. After that, and before her death, he did attend them.

ANNIHILATION.

Bailey, our old English authority, says, "Annihilate; to bring or turn to nothing; to destroy utterly: all other destructions being no more than alterations, or changes of form, and not of matter." Now, we have no good reason for believing that a single particle of matter ever has been, will be, or can be utterly destroyed. Then, in all statements and reasoning concerning matter, we have a right to say that there never has been, nor never will be, a particle of it annihilated. Some persons express great horror at the idea of being annihilated at death, which they seem to think they must be unless they have an immortal soul; and in order to counteract these unpleasant feelings, there have been many arguments resorted to, to prove that man has an immortal soul; but I have never had any thing presented to any of my senses that I can consider proof, or even reasonable evidence, of the fact. It has been frequently said, that so long as a man lives, he is susceptible of improvement, and that other animals cannot be taught any thing after they become aged; that man's body is matter; that matter cannot move itself — therefore man must have a soul to move his body; that that soul is spirit, and being spirit is immortal. These declarations are of the same cat-

egory as the assertion of Xenophon, that a cup of cold water given to a person in a fever at first appears to do him good, but in the end makes him worse. This assertion, after having been received without examination hundreds of years as a very wise and positive truth, is now, after it has been, no doubt, the death of thousands of human beings, known to be an error. This shows how wrong it is to take the assertion of any person without strict examination, let him be considered ever so learned and wise. Seventy years may be called old age for a man, ninety years very old; fifteen years we call old age for a horse, twenty years very old. Now, every person who has noticed the condition of these two animals in old age must know that man's mental faculties fail as much, generally, between seventy and ninety as a horse's do between fifteen and twenty; and, as far as we can judge, man's memory fails more. I knew a man at, I think, about the age of eighty, in good health, that did not know his own children, whom he saw every few days. It is said that General Stark, who died at the age of ninety-four, for several years before his death, could not remember any thing of the revolution except the battle of Bennington, in which he was chief commander on the American side; and that, as long as his health was good, he could relate all the proceedings in that battle without any variation of consequence from its correct history. As to the body of man being matter, and that matter cannot move itself, and therefore must have a soul to move it, the argument will apply with equal force to every indi-

vidual of animated nature, from man down to what is arrogantly called "the mean worm that crawls in the dust." There is nothing naturally mean. Nature is noble, and so are all her works. Where there is meanness, it has been generated by adverse circumstances: even the flea would not bite you if not urged by hunger, the satisfying of which is self-preservation, justifiable in every being. Man would be neither vicious nor immoral if he were not rendered such by the bad organization of society every where — the rule of tyrants and clergy.

IMMORTALITY.

Theologians say that they receive great comfort in this life from the idea of immortality. Now, it appears to me that of all persons the theologian can receive the least comfort from the hope of immortality; for he cannot know, whatever may be his opinion, but that he may be one of those who will go to that eternal punishment which he says is to be the lot of a part of mankind; and the possibility of such being his fate, would, in a sensitive, well-balanced mind, it appears to me, outweigh all the anticipated pleasure that could be drawn from even a knowledge of his being immortal. I heard a man upwards of forty years of age say, that if he was certain of being eternally punished, he would prefer immortality to annihilation. That man was a leading member of a religious society, a respectable and good member of general society, and considered

above the mass in point of judgment and talents. He and myself lived near neighbors some years; our families became connected by marriage, so I was well acquainted with him; and I cannot feel justified not to admit that he said as he thought at the time; and if he did, it is conclusive evidence to my mind that he had never seriously examined his own judgment and scrutinized his own feelings on the subject; but that, like the great mass of mankind, he suffered himself to be governed more by faith than by reason.

Mankind differ much as to what is pleasure and what is pain; yet it is acknowledged by all that every person desires pleasure, and wishes to shun pain; but that which brings neither pleasure nor pain cannot be very horrible. We all, I suppose, conclude, and perhaps correctly, that when a person is about to die, he has more or less pain, or at least some disagreeable sensations. These feelings, at the approach of death, will be equally the same, whether we be continued in sensitive existence or not; but when we are dead, that is, when our bodily organs are destroyed, or deadened beyond restoration, then, of course, our sensations are destroyed, and we cannot feel either pleasure or pain. Therefore, if that be the end of our sensitive existence, death, though it has brought us no pleasure, rids us of all pain. We do not feel horror at the idea of going to sleep; yet, by sound sleep, so long as it lasts, we are as completely annihilated as we can be by death. Then, death is only a long sleep. If we should be continued in sensitive existence after death, no one who conducts well towards the human family, and does

not worship a God of injustice, rapine, and murder such as Moses's God, can certainly have any thing to fear from an infinitely wise, infinitely powerful, and infinitely good God — if there be such a being.

The lights of science and a just system of jurisprudence would soon point out the road to true knowledge if the influence of the clergy over society did not compel the teachers to mystify the sciences, and present them in a light favorable to the clerical trade — that of deceiving the people. And so long as theologians have the management of the schools for the education of the young, so long will the mass of society be hypocritical and vicious. An illustration of this has very recently taken place in one of the public schools of New York.

SCHOOLS. — WORSHIP.

"An interesting question has recently come before the superintendent of common schools in New York. Complaint was brought against a teacher [the name of the teacher is given] for attempting to compel a boy to study and read the Protestant Testament against the wishes of his parents. The teacher punished him severely for obeying his parents' instead of her own commands, and expelled him from school." These complaints involved three points: —

1. May the pupils of common schools be required to join in prayers as a matter of school discipline?

2. May Catholic children be required, contrary to their own wishes and those of their parents, to use

the Protestant version of the Bible as a reading book in school?

3. May Catholic children be required to commit to memory portions of the same version of the Bible as a part of their school exercises?

The superintendent has published his decision. He replies, "No," to the three questions. He says, that if the truth of the charges can be fully established, he will annul Miss ——'s license to teach in any school supported by the public money.

This decision of the superintendent is certainly a correct one. Then, if prayer is not a matter of school discipline; if the Bible (no matter what version) ought not to be required as a reading book in schools, the question naturally arises, Why is it not banished from schools, both public and private? The true answer to that question is, I think, Nearly all the schools, both public and private, are under the control of the clergy. Under the present organization of society, wealth and power are, in estimating worth of character, set preëminently above honesty and benevolence. The clergy love wealth and power; they are, therefore, anxious to support the Bible; for wherever the laws or regulations of society will enforce Bible institutions, there the clergy are clothed with unjust power and much wealth. Both the Protestant and the Catholic versions of the Bible have too many obscene, unjust, and vicious statements, commanded, approbated, or tolerated by the Bible God, to be read by young persons without much injury to their minds.

Worship is a personification of tyrant and slave:

none but a tyrant will demand worship; none but a slave can worship. All worship is idolatry. We have our political idols, our war idols, and religious. All fables, and all novels, (which are fables,) from Æsop's Fables down to religious tracts, are injurious to correct morals, by familiarizing society to a most degrading and injurious vice — that of lying.

THE BIBLE.

"The Philadelphia Register has, for some days past, contained a report of a discussion which has been going on between Professor Berg, a Lutheran clergyman, we believe, and one Barker, an Infidel of the German Materialist school of sceptics. Eight nights have been devoted to discussing the question whether the Bible is a book of divine inspiration.

"The great marvel with us is, that such a question should be started, or entertained at all, in this enlightened age of the world, when the faith of millions is settled, and fixed, and grounded in the divine origin of this most priceless of books; and the next marvel is, that any respectable Protestant clergyman would suffer himself to be seduced into so bootless a controversy with any one, much less a foreign Infidel, under any conceivable or possible circumstances. No iota of good can ever come of such a disputation. The Infidel will be Infidel still. He seeks not for light, or he would resort for it to the record of Him who said, 'Let there be light, and there was light.' These scoffers wish not to be disabused of

their erroneous opinions, but rather to create doubts in weak minds, and cause them to stumble. The old world is making an alarming contribution of the evil-disposed, God-hating, Bible-despising emissaries of Satan to our shores. And they should be shunned as lepers; their contact is pestilential, for they spread moral death in their way; they blight the hopes of the soul, and shed darkness of Egyptian night upon its pathway to immortality. What! countenance these hellish emissaries of the Evil One in their crusade against the word of the Most High God? Extend the hand of fellowship to the incendiary with torch ready to fire the ark in which is lodged the charter of our immortality? Monstrous! folly the most insane and suicidal! And then, if the Bible sinks, what remains to us? Where are we to find a substitute for it? Like blotting the sun from the natural firmament, when this great moral light is put out, extinguished, what is to become of the world? Where find a book with such a gospel? with similar glad tidings of salvation to a ruined world? Where find so gracious and merciful an exhibition of the condescension of God? of his boundless love to the family of man? What would this Barker and those of his school give us instead of this word of the living God? His cold, heartless, and bewildering materialism? a sensualism as soul-blighting as communion with the Spirit of Evil? The bare idea of the fall of the Bible is too horrible, too frightful, for conception! No, no; away with all these arch enemies of our faith — our strong and abiding faith in the verity of God's word! But we have no

fears. We securely rest our hope upon the affirmation of God himself, that 'heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away.' 'The word of the Lord endureth forever.'

"Why then should we doubt, or fear, or tremble, when the Lord himself has promised to uphold his word against all opposers? Infidels may continue to assail, as Infidels have assailed, the Bible and its doctrines through all time; but its Author's arm is not shortened, nor his power waxed weak, that he is not able and willing to preserve to the world this last hope — this message of mercy to the otherwise hopeless and despairing sons of Adam! This day, thank God, the Bible is more deeply seated in the very heart of hearts of the people than at any time in the last eighteen hundred years. It has legions of friends, seen and unseen — millions of friends upon earth, and countless millions in the skies; and what is more and better than all, it has God for its Author, and God for its Defender, and the imbittered powers of the Prince of Darkness cannot wrest it from the hands of the nations of the earth. It will go on in its redeeming mission, carrying the glad tidings of joy to the uttermost parts of the habitable globe, until a knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea — until the Prince of Peace again comes to reign in millennial glory." — *Washington* (*Pa.*) *Reporter*, February, 1854.

The uncharitable accusations and denunciations, without a particle of sound reasoning or common sense, which run through the whole of the foregoing epistle, evince that its author is unjust in principle,

and vindictive in temper. And it does not at all surprise us to find such lack of correct principle, and an entire absence of charitable feeling, in those who worship the Bible God; for a more unjust, vindictive, and tyrannical character than that which Moses has given to his God it seems almost impossible that any being can have. "The great marvel with us is, that such a question should be started, or entertained at all, in this enlightened age of the world." That is sheer hypocrisy; for the writer must know that in every age since the Bible has been thrust upon mankind as a divine book, there have every where been many among the best members of society — equal in learning, talents, and correct morals to any others — that questioned the correctness of such claim, while some unequivocally denied that that book was entitled to claim any such authorship; and that in many instances those persons were most unjustly and inhumanly treated for being so honest as to declare the reasonable conviction of their understanding: and such tyrannical treatment of honest persons has made hypocrites of the mass of what is called civilized society. The truth of this position is evinced by the treatment that each individual receives from the officers of organized society, and from each other. There is but little weight given to the word or the oath of an individual if it is known that he or she is directly or indirectly personally interested in the matter pending. This state of society has arisen from the fact, that honesty and candor have been, and now are, almost universally persecuted by the clergy and their

sycophantic tools. There are, in the course of these quotations, remarks, and review, some few things given (out of a great many of the like which have recently taken place) which go to show that in "this enlightened age of the world" the mass of mankind, in every country, are ridden by the clergy (who are "booted and spurred" by the grace of Moses's God) from their cradles to their graves.

"Much less a foreign Infidel." Is a foreign Infidel any worse than a native Infidel? We are taught that foreigners have not the liberty to investigate matters of religion or politics that we have. If so, and Infidelity is wrong, then the foreign Infidel is less blamable than the American Infidel; but the whole epistle shows that the object of the writer is to "gull" all he can. That bait was put in to catch native "gudgeons." "And then, if the Bible sinks, what remains to us? Where are we to find a substitute for it?" There will "remain" reason and common sense; and good lectures on the arts and sciences, and on correct moral principles, will be far more useful than the Bible, and not more than one third as expensive. And reason and common sense teach, that, under such a system, the justice, the benevolent feelings, and the correct moral deportment of society would, before many years, be superior to what they ever can be under the teachings of the Bible; and though no system governed by finite beings — and we know of none but finite beings — can ever become perfect, yet the system proposed, while continued, would ever advance towards perfection.

INFIDELITY. — EUCLID'S ELEMENTS.

The opposers of "Infidelity," as they call it, continually hold out the idea that Infidels are not candid, are not sincere. Such conduct, in such persons, is sheer impudence, dishonest, and an insult to the common sense of society. There are millions, besides the clergy, that are directly, and millions more indirectly, pecuniarily interested in the manufacturing and in the circulating of the Bible, and in propagating and explaining its doctrines; and it cannot be successfully controverted, that, taken through all its ramifications, there are more persons who receive pecuniary interest from it than from any other one article of commerce in the world. And what does the (so-called) Infidel get for advancing his opinions? He gets abuse and slander plentifully heaped upon him by these pecuniarily-interested hypocrites; and in his pecuniary matters often suffers loss. After monarchical government had been submitted to by the mass of the inhabitants of what is called the civilized world as a divine institution hundreds of years, the American people took hold of it, turned it right side out, and exhibited its enormity to the gaze of mankind, and then set it aside not only as useless, but as absolutely injurious: and now the rest of the inhabitants of the whole world are preparing to follow their example. The clerical system claims the same authorship as does monarchical government; and if it be boldly taken hold of, and its features candidly examined, it will be found equally as use-

less, and more injurious than monarchical government; for the clergy enslave the mind, monarchy the body.

It is a very common idea that it is useless to teach a boy that expects to be a farmer, a shopkeeper, or a mechanic (except some few trades) algebra and geometry; but it is a great mistake, particularly with respect to geometry.

A short time expended in studying Euclid's Elements will create in the student a habit of close thinking and reasoning, that will be of great advantage to him, by enabling him to detect error, whether in himself or in others. Euclid's Elements, a good treatise on mechanical powers, and one on astronomy, may be, by any industrious youth of sound mind, in such spare hours as his vocation may afford him, studied so as to be of great advantage to him through life, even without a teacher. The day has gone by, particularly in the United States, that bound the mass of the people to believe that none but those who have the reputation of being very learned, and very wise, can exhibit valuable truths; therefore, if those few who do think and examine for themselves, and who, from such examination, draw such conclusions as the reasoning powers of their minds, candidly exercised, will enable them to do, would be candid and resolute enough to declare, on all suitable occasions, their opinions, their example and influence would cause others to think, examine, and determine in the same way; continually enlarging the circle until it encompasses the great mass of the people of the United States at least;

and when the mass shall exercise their own reasoning powers in all-important matters, they will as certainly set aside the influence of the clergy as they did that of the king.

"Under existing disadvantages, the formation of a single valuable and philosophical character must be a rarity. On his entrance into active life, a man listens to the opinions in general circulation, and the current of fashionable applause or censure will wash away the very best previous instruction. His estimate of virtue and vice will become altogether debased, and adjusted to the reigning errors, even on the supposition that his private education beforehand had been excellent. But this, in all probability, may not have been the case; for the instructors of youth are obliged, by their own interest, to inculcate lessons conformable to the dominant opinions, and to bestow upon those precepts the name of wisdom. His notions of truth and justice will, by these means, be perverted from the earliest period of infancy, and the whole tone of his morality will become nothing but a wretched flattery of the actual prejudices of the vulgar. Thus the man of surpassing energy and abilities, who under a just and natural system would have been foremost in promoting the liberties of his country, becomes only the instrument of its deepest injury."

REVIEW.

CHAPTER I.

MOSES'S WRITINGS. — RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES. — THE BIBLE. — CREATION.

In the succeeding pages I have reviewed and quoted Moses's writings principally, because, I believe, Jews, Christians, Mahometans, and Mormons declare that Moses's writings are, at least, as high authority as any in the Bible, having been, as they say, given by God himself to Moses in an audible and distinct voice; whereas a large part of the matters related by the other writers of the Bible are said to have been communicated in dreams and visions, when the individual was either asleep or partially divested of his natural powers. If the history written by Moses was not written at the express command and information of a God that created and put in motion the innumerable bodies and systems of the Universe, and by whose power universal nature is sustained and regulated, then is Judaism, Christianity, Mahometanism, and Mormonism each false; for they are all founded on the assumed correctness and divinity of Moses's history.

A religious community cannot be a moral community, for all religions are destructive of justice, and therefore destructive of morals. This, I think, will be manifest by a

free, candid, and impartial examination of the precepts, &c., of that religion which is, in our community at least, declared to be the best of all religions — that is, the Christian religion. When I speak of the Christian religion, I do not mean merely the precepts said to have been laid down by Jesus Christ, but of the commands, the demands, the requirements, &c., contained in what the Christians denominate the Holy Bible, and which they declare to be the word of God.

It is declared by all Christians, I believe, that the coming of Jesus Christ upon the earth, his mission and character, were prophesied, or foretold, by the writers of the Old Testament, hundreds of years before he was born. Now, if, on a candid examination, we find that the passages referred to by the guardians of Bible knowledge, as prophecies of the coming of Jesus Christ, cannot, reasonably, have any reference to him, or to the times in which it is said he lived, then will common sense declare that he is not the being that he is by Christians represented to be. Or if, on a candid examination, we cannot find any reason that convinces us that the said Old Testament is the word of God, or that it has been written by men inspired by God so to write, but that it is the dreams, fancies, and prophecies of persons not so inspired, then it must be impossible for us to believe, no matter how much we desire so to do, that Jesus Christ is the person and character that he is by Christians represented to be.

Let us examine this "Holy Bible," and ascertain whether it really is, or is not, the "word of God;" for by a candid examination we can so ascertain. If not, then is it an unnecessary, unprofitable work; for unless we can ascertain its real character, we cannot properly judge its contents; if we cannot correctly judge its contents, then it is of no use to us.

The first five books of the Bible were written, it is said, by a Jew, named Moses; who, we are told in this "holy" work, was the meekest man that had lived. But from the history he has given of himself and his people, I feel bound, by justice, to place him among those arrogant, vindictive characters who, by their infamous acts of tyranny and injustice, have so often disgraced the character of man.

In the beginning of his first book (Genesis) Moses gives a history of what he calls *creation*. Whether true or false, or whether there ever was any thing created, we have no means of ascertaining. If we have ever seen any thing created, then, when we see another thing that has like organization, like properties, to the thing which we saw created, it would be reasonable for us to conclude, or believe, that it was also created. Yet this reasoning, in application, might be subject to many and great errors; for there are many things that are the productions of nature, or, as they are generally termed, things created, that would be, by some persons, considered mechanical productions, the work of art, as having been formed or made of materials previously existing; and some things that are mechanical productions would be classed as things created. The difference between things made, or formed, and things created, is this: things made are such as are formed of materials previously existing; things created are such things, if any such things there be, as have been spoken into existence from nothing.

According to Moses's account neither Adam nor Eve were created, but were made of materials previously existing. There is no mistake in this, although Moses appears to use the words *made* and *created* as synonymous. Moses says, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the

fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."—Gen. i. 26–28.

Moses says, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found a helpmeet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof: And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."—Gen. ii. 7, 20–24.

Now, from the statements which Moses makes in this history, it is quite clear that neither Adam nor Eve were created, but were made of materials previously existing. These statements made by Moses concerning the creation of things appear to me, like all other world-makings that I have ever met with, to be a jumble of inconsistent, ridiculous fable without a moral. And whether matter was at any time created, and things as we find them made thereof

by the Creator, or whether matter eternally existed, possessing the properties it has, and that things as we now see them are the results of the innumerable changes which have been going on through all eternity, our duty is the same — that is, we ought to make every sensitive being as happy as the nature of things and our situation will enable us to do.

There have been a great many attempts made to show, that, reasoning from analogy, things as we now see them must have been, if not created, at least formed by a designer; for, it is contended, they all show design. For instance: it has been said that if a person who had never seen a watch should chance to find one in a country he had supposed not to be inhabited by any rational beings, he would, on examining the watch, change his opinion, and believe that it was inhabited by intelligent beings, or, at least, that there had been such a being there; for that which he had found exhibited undeniable proof of design, and therefore must have been constructed by an intelligent being. And by applying the same reasoning to man, it is asserted that he exhibits such undeniable proofs of design, that we cannot reasonably but believe, that, if not created, he was at least formed, by an intelligent being.

CHAPTER II.

ANALOGY.—DIVISIBILITY OF MATTER.

Reasoning from analogy is certainly subject to great error; for interest, or prereceived opinions, will influence the best judgment to suppose analogy between things where there is none at all. I think it may be considered a general, if not an unexceptionable rule, that the productions of nature and the formations of art have no analogy between them. In respect to the body of a man and a watch, though they are each a very complicated machine, and therefore easily put out of order, yet they are not alike in any of their parts, or in their composition, or in their powers. The body of a man has the power, in a considerable degree, of adapting itself to circumstances. For instance: if a man that has been brought up in a moderate climate goes into a cold climate, he will suffer much; yet, if he continues in that climate, in a few seasons he will not only not suffer, but the climate will become agreeable to him. Not so with a watch; for if you expose that to cold for years, the same degree of cold that stopped it the first time you exposed it will stop it the last time. Again: the body of a man can, by continuous use of deadly poison, enable itself to take a quantity thereof, one tenth of which, taken at the first dose, would have certainly destroyed it. Not so with a watch. If on it any substance that will corrode or destroy any part of its moving power be used, ever so cautiously, commencing with the smallest portion, and increasing it with all possible caution, it will take no

more, after long use, to destroy its motion, than it would have taken at first. Again: if any accident happens to the body of a man, internally or externally, if it does not destroy its vitality, the body has the power, in a considerable degree, if not entirely, to repair the injury; but if a watch be injured in any way, it has no power to repair itself in the least. All the productions of nature have, in a greater or less degree, the power of self-reparation in cases of injury. The crab, and some others, if you take off a limb, a new one will grow in its place; if you cut limbs from a tree, new ones take their places, &c.; but there is no work of art that can renew or repair any part of its own organization that has been removed or injured. There is another strongly-marked difference between the productions of nature and the formations of art: the productions of nature, generally, if not always, carry with them the means of continuing their like; the formations of art never do: so, as before stated, there is no analogy between them. We, therefore, cannot reason from the one to the other as we can of such things as we find to contain like essences, like qualities, or like powers.

We know so little of the properties or powers of matter, that we cannot say what it can or cannot do. I once heard a preacher undertake, in his sermon, to prove that man had an immortal soul; and the principal argument he advanced, the one on which he appeared chiefly to rely, was, that inert matter, as he called it, could not move itself; that the body of man was such matter, therefore must be moved by something superior to itself; that that something was the soul; that the soul was spirit, and therefore eternal. I observed to a friend, after we got out of church, whether it could be possible that Mr. G—— was so blinded by his prereceived opinions as not to see that his argument as

clearly established that a dog, and every other animal, has an immortal soul as it did that man has.

The two following extracts will exhibit some of the properties and powers of matter: —

"It is utterly impossible for the mind to conceive of the almost infinite minuteness of an atom. A single grain of gold, for instance, might be beaten out so as to cover a square foot of space, and yet we have not approached its reduction to atoms. An admirable illustration by Depler, he would give, as he had never seen it quoted. It was this: Reduce a cubic inch of sulphur to fine powder, and you may cover with it an area of six square miles. Take one grain of this powder, triturate it thoroughly with ninety-nine grains of sugar of milk, and its presence would be detectable in every grain of the hundred. Take a grain of this and treat it in the same way with other ninety-nine grains of sugar of milk, and so on. At the third dilution, as we may call it, the powder thus resulting from a cubic inch of sulphur would cover two square miles of area; at the fifth, the empire of Austria; at the sixth, the whole of Asia and Africa; at the ninth, it would cover the entire surface of the sun, with all its planets and their satellites. And yet, although in every grain of this powder the sulphur was found to be present, we had not reduced it to atoms. Again: it is well known that every drop of putrid water, under certain circumstances, contains millions of animalcules, invisible except to high powers of the microscope. And every one of these animalcules is a highly-organized being, having at least something analogous to a skeleton — capable of action, of pursuing, of retreating, of attack, and of defence. The globules of the blood of an elephant are perceivable only with a powerful microscope; and the animalcules must have blood, and that blood must consist

of similar globules. Once more: the *bovista gigantea*, a species of mushroom, in the space of twelve hours, shoots up from a scarcely-perceptible germ to a plant a foot in diameter. Every square inch of its surface contains three hundred and thirty-six millions of cells, every cell, with its six sides, is divided from those around it by filaments of far more complex structure than an atom of potash — and yet we have not got a glimpse even of the atoms of which they are composed. He would confess, inquiries such as these inspired him with but one feeling — fear. It was as if he were taken by some profound astronomer far among the worlds that people infinite space, and he was ready to cry out for some one to lead him back to solid ground once more. One thing only gave him comfort: he knew something higher, deeper, than those facts — it was their idea. These were, after all, only the letters in which the information is blazoned. He felt as did the deep-thoughted Pascal, when he exclaimed, that, although the universe were to crush him, he would still feel himself greater than the universe, for he knew that and how it was crushing him." — *Darwin's Lectures.*

INFUSORIA, OR ANIMALCULES.—"Geology unfolds greater wonders in the ancient microscopic world than the mastodon, dinotherium, and other huge monsters once living, but now extinct races upon the globe. Microscopic animals we formerly supposed to be little more than particles of matter endowed with life; recent examinations by a Prussian naturalist have discovered in them mouths, teeth, stomachs, muscles, veins, glands, eyes, and other organs. Their increase is truly astonishing. Ehrenberg, the professor, says, that of one species, a single individual is capable of becoming, in a few days, one hundred and seventy billions. It will, perhaps, be thought still more wonderful,

that these animals should not only be found in a fossil state, but form the whole mass of rocks and of soil for miles in extent. Chalk, and even flint, and some of the gems are found, to a great extent, to be composed of animalcules. In a manufactory of whiting, in New York, where chalk is finely pulverized, and deposited in vats, the water in which it is immersed becomes alive with moving, acting animalcules; and it is thought by the proprietor that they furnish food for ducks, which spend much of their days and nights in the vats. A cubic inch of iron ochre is said to contain the remains of one billion of living, acting, producing beings. Upon the Alps, snow sometimes falls of a red color, and it is found that the coloring matter is composed chiefly of infusoria, or microscopic animals, which, however, die on the melting of the snow from excessive heat. Professor Hitch says, that, in New England and New York, silicious marl, occurring beneath peat swamps, has been shown by Professor J. W. Bailey, of West Point, to be almost entirely made up of the fossil skeletons of infusoria, some of which appear to be identical with those found by Ehrenberg in Germany. Deposits of this silicious marl are very common in Massachusetts, and all hitherto examined contain vast numbers of these relics; indeed, they constitute nearly the whole of the deposits. When it is considered, as those who have examined say, that one thousand millions of these animals would together form a mass no larger than a grain of sand, some idea, or rather, perhaps, no idea, can be formed of the magnitude of one of these living, moving things — each furnished with the organs of life, action, and enjoyment scarcely less perfect, perhaps, than quadrupeds, fowls, and other animals, or even man, whose anatomy and mechanism we have been accustomed to admire, as proof of the existence, wisdom,

power, and goodness of the great Contriver and Architect." — *Self-Instructor.*

These two extracts show, in some degree, the divisibility of matter.

CHAPTER III.

THE PRODUCTIONS OF NATURE. — TESTIMONY. — NOAH.

As before stated, the productions of Nature, generally, if not always, have the means of continuing their species, and in a great degree of repairing injuries; of avoiding injuries; of lying dormant in situations unfavorable to life to a very great length of time, — how long we know not, — and after thus lying, if placed in a favorable situation, of springing into life. We have been assured that wheat, and other seeds, have been found embedded with Egyptian mummies, and in other situations, which must have been lying there thousands of years; and being placed in favorable situations, have vegetated with vigor, and produced their kind. Frogs, and other animals, have been found enclosed in the body of trees, and in rocks, and other situations, where they must have been hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years, and yet alive. Seeing that Nature can do so much, if we proceed to reason, from analogy if you please, to what we do not know of her powers, and by so reasoning should come to the conclusion that she can do a great deal more than we know of, and that she may have formed, not created, things as we now find them, I do not know that it would be a very absurd conclusion.

Be this thing creation as it may, when or by whom done, or whether it was ever done, our duty is the same. The sum total of moral rectitude is contained in one word—*justice;* the sum total of moral obliquity is also contained in one word—*injustice.* Every word or action of a rational being that is just is moral; every word or action of a rational being that is unjust is immoral.

Before further reviewing the histories mentioned, I will state a few principles, which will, upon a candid examination, I think, be acknowledged to be true. *First.* That testimony, no matter how positive, is not such evidence as can make us know that the thing testified to is true; nor is it sufficient evidence on which to ground a firm belief unless connected with something that we do know, having some analogy to the thing testified to. For instance: if a man that I am acquainted with, and always found to be a man of truth, was to tell me that he this morning breakfasted at a certain house in Cincinnati at eight o'clock, and is now, as I know, in Piqua, ninety miles from Cincinnati, at eight o'clock in the evening, and that he rode the same horse the whole distance, I would certainly consider it a very great ride; yet it is quite probable that I would believe his statement. But if the same person was to make precisely the same statement, except that it was in ———, three hundred miles from Piqua, I certainly could not believe him. If his statement was actually true I could not believe it—and why not? Because I do not believe on testimony; for in these two cases the testifier is the same, and if I believed on testimony, that is, if I considered testimony as evidence of the truth of the statement made, I could certainly believe the one as easily as the other. How do we judge the truth or falsehood of testimony? Testimony, in general, and perhaps in every case, relates, or is in some

way connected with something, the like of which we have some knowledge of. For instance: in the two statements before made, the truth or falsehood of each appears to depend on the speed and power of the horse. We examine the first, and, reasoning from what we know of the speed and power of a horse, we conclude that, though it is a long distance to ride in so short a time, it might have been done; and believing the man to be a man of truth, we believe his statement. We examine the second statement, and, reasoning in the same manner, that is, from what we know to what we do not know, we conclude that it cannot be done; and notwithstanding we have always considered the man a man of truth, we do not believe his statement. Then, certainly, we do not believe on testimony, but on the reasonableness of the thing testified to.

Second. That every reasonable being, no matter how wise and powerful, or how ignorant and feeble, is, by his duty to himself and to every sensitive being, bound to do all the good his knowledge, power, and situation will enable him to do.

Third. That in a well-regulated political society the only object in punishing such as violate the laws and regulations of the society, is, or ought to be, to protect the lives, the property, and the liberty of the rest of the society, or else to reform the individual punished; and any punishment that is not calculated to accomplish one or both these objects is improper, unnecessary, unjust, and tyrannical.

Fourth. That any and every rational being who punishes another for committing a crime which he, the punisher, could have prevented being committed, without committing a crime himself, is a tyrant void of justice.

In examining the histories and biographies written, or

said to have been written, by Moses, I shall commence with some of the actions of Noah, after he had come out of the ark — he being, according to Moses, the only person on the earth whom God cared any thing about; for the other six or seven appear to have been saved because they were his: "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."

"And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savor; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth: neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. . . . And the sons of Noah that went forth of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and Ham is the father of Canaan. These are the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread. And Noah began to be a husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: and he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, went backwards, and covered the nakedness of their father: and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years: and he died." — Gen. viii. 20, 21; ix. 18–28.

Here we have the character of the first of God's favorites after the flood. He gets drunk, and lieth naked in his tent. One of his sons happens to see him so exposed; he told his two brothers, and they took a garment upon their shoulders, and entered the tent backwards, and covered their father, without seeing his exposed situation. But when this favorite awoke from his drunkenness, and understood that his youngest son had seen him in his beastly exposure, he became so enraged that he pronounced the bitterest curse, not on his son, but on his grandson, Canaan, who, it does not appear, knew any thing of the matter. And where was the necessity, the morality, the justice of this abominable curse, even if it had been pronounced against Ham, the pretended offender? but being pronounced against Canaan, it violates the fundamental principle of justice, — that is, each individual shall be accountable for his own acts only, — and becomes execrable in the extreme.

CHAPTER IV.

MOSES'S GOD.—ABRAHAM.—ISAAC.—JACOB.—JOSEPH.

I WISH it to be understood, distinctly, and remembered, that when, in this examination, I speak of God, I mean Moses's God—a being, who, as appears to me, was created by Moses for the purpose of giving some show of plausibility to his account of creation, and of the origin and progress of the people from whom he sprang; and to enable himself and his minions to humbug and enslave his own people, and to plunder and murder all others, of every nation, that his ambitious and malignant disposition prompted him to. We will examine somewhat Moses's progress hereafter.

The first act of any importance recorded concerning Abraham is his travelling, by the command of God, (Moses's God,) in search of a land which he would show him. And notwithstanding God had expressly declared that he would show him a land, and bless him, and make him a great nation, and make his name great, and said, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee," (Gen. xii. 3,) Abraham appears not to have had confidence in his God; for when in Egypt fear caused him to instruct his wife to lie to the people thereof, and himself did lie to Pharaoh. Abraham and his wife, being sent by order of Pharaoh out of Egypt, journeyed on to Gerar; and having succeeded so well in Egypt by their lies, when they entered into Gerar they followed the same policy; and there

they succeeded better than in Egypt. Abraham told Abimelech, King of Gerar, that Sarah was his sister, and she told the king that Abraham was her brother. (Gen. xx.) Thereupon Abimelech took her; but, as the story goes, God, in a dream by night, warned him that Sarah was Abraham's wife, and that he must restore her to Abraham, under penalty of death if he neglected so to do; and in the mean time God afflicted Abimelech's household. As the story is related by Moses, Abimelech appears to have been a man of sound heart and clean hands, (a thing not very common among kings even in our day,) for he told God that he had been deceived by the lies of Abraham and his wife, and that that which he had done he had done "in the integrity of his heart and innocency of his hands." (Gen. xx. 5.) And God acknowledged that he knew Abimelech had so done; yet God could not or would not pardon Abimelech and his household until prayed to so to do by the lying hypocrite Abraham. When Abraham was eighty-six years old, his wife's maid had a child by him. (Gen. xvi. 16.) His wife had never had a child; but fourteen years after the birth of her maid's son, his wife had a son, and he called his name Isaac. And the day that Isaac was weaned Abraham made a great feast. Sarah became very much displeased at some of the conduct of Ishmael, her maid's son; insisted on Abraham's driving him and his mother from the house. And early in the morning Abraham gave Hagar and her son some bread and a bottle of water, and sent them away, and they wandered in the wilderness; and when the water was spent, she "cast the child under one of the shrubs" while she went to seek for water. Abraham was eighty-six years old when Ishmael was born; he was one hundred years old when Isaac was born; therefore Ishmael must have been fourteen years old

when Isaac was born; and it was the morning after the great feast given at the weaning of Isaac, that Hagar and her son were driven out. (Gen. xxi.) As Abraham and Sarah were both old, and Isaac the only child his mother had ever had, it is reasonable to suppose that he was two or three years old when weaned; at any rate, we cannot suppose him less than one year old when weaned. Then, Ishmael was over fifteen, perhaps seventeen, when he and his mother were driven from his father's house, and wandered in the wilderness. The assertion that a boy of fifteen or seventeen years old was by his mother thrown under a shrub while she went to seek water, is certainly a bright idea for an inspired writer! But what are we to think of the justice and morality of Abraham, who got a woman, that was under his control, with child, acknowledged the child to be his, kept the woman and her son in his house a number of years, and then, on charge of a little indiscretion in the boy, turned them both off with some bread and a bottle of water to wander in the wilderness, when he was rich, and feasting sumptuously at home?

God told Isaac not to go into Egypt, but to dwell in the land which he would show him; and that he would be with him, and give him the land. (Gen. xxvi. 2.) And Isaac went to the same place where his father and mother both had, by the king thereof, been reproved for lying before he was born; and the same king, or another of the same name, reigned. "And the men of the place asked him of his wife, and he said, She is my sister," (Gen. xxvi. 7;) for notwithstanding God had declared that he would be with him, he had so little confidence in the promises of his God, that he was afraid to own that she was his wife. And after he had been there a long time the king told him that the woman who had come with him was certainly his wife,

and asked him why he had said she was his sister; and he answered, that he was afraid to say she was his wife. Though Isaac had, by lying, deceived Abimelech and his people, the king allowed him to remain among them, and told his people that if any of them touched Isaac or his wife, such person should surely be put to death. (Gen. xxvi. 11.)

It appears to me that any person who will candidly examine the lives of Abraham and Isaac must conclude that they were each very deficient in morals; or rather, that they were very licentious characters. But when we examine the life of Jacob, the son of Isaac, and grandson of Abraham, we find that in hypocrisy, lying, swindling, lewdness, and injustice he much exceeded his father or his grandfather. Jacob's first act towards his brother Esau, as recorded by Moses, was brutal and unjust, and therefore immoral in the extreme. When Esau came in very faint, and "at the point to die," (Gen. xxv. 5,) he requested Jacob to give him some food, which Jacob would not do, only on condition that Esau should sell to him his birthright, and swear to resign it, which Esau did — observing at the time, that as he was at the point to die, his birthright would be of no use to him. (Gen. xxvii. 19.) Jacob's second act was yet more atrocious than the first: that is, base hypocrisy and lying to his father, and cruel swindling and injustice to his brother; for by his infamous deceptions he obtained the blessing which his father intended for, and supposed he had conferred on Esau. (Gen. xxviii. 5.) After Jacob had committed these atrocious acts, fearing the resentment of his brother, he left his father's house, and fled to his uncle Laban, his mother's brother, where he was paid prettily enough in his own base coin. (Gen. xxix. 18.) Having fallen in love with Rachel, his uncle's daugh-

ter, he agreed to serve her father seven years for her; at the expiration of which, Leah, Rachel's sister, deceived him, and superseded her sister. (Gen. xxix. 5.) But Jacob determined not to be wholly cheated of Rachel; he therefore married her also, and served her father other seven years. (Gen. xxix. 30.) And when Jacob and his father-in-law parted, Rachel stole some of her father's gods, (Gen. xxxi. 19;) and when Laban pursued, and charged them with the theft, Rachel, by lies and hypocrisy of the most shameful grade, deceived her father, (Gen. xxxi. 35,) so he did not find his property, though it was then in their possession; and Jacob became very angry, and crimination and recrimination took place very freely between him and his wives' father. Finally, Laban, knowing that himself and son-in-law were both rogues, and not trustworthy in any respect, proposed that they should set up a landmark between them, and each swear not to pass said landmark on to the premises of the other with intention to do harm, (Gen. xxxi. 44:) so they parted, and Laban returned home. Jacob, before his marriage, had made a vow which clearly showed his disposition to make contracts as favorable to himself as possible. He vowed, that "if God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee." (Gen. xxviii. 20–22.) Here was an offer which I suppose the veriest miser would at any time be glad to make, if he thought it would be acceded to; that is, if God would give him a plenty of all that he should desire, he would certainly give back to God one tenth thereof. Jacob had two wives,

and each wife had a handmaid which she gave to her husband to be his concubine. Jacob, having women so plenty, became indifferent about his first wife, (Gen. xxx. 16;) so much so that she had to pay hire in order to get him to lie with her one night. From such parents we ought not to expect virtuous or moral children; and the record showeth that theirs were such as it is reasonable to expect of such parents. Their history can be read in the Bible, and it is disgusting to review such trash.

Joseph, according to the record, appears to have been the most virtuous and moral man of all his family, from his great-grandfather down to himself and brethren. Perhaps he owed his superiority of character to his being taken from his family and nation when young, seventeen years old, and brought up by a people of better manners and better morals than the corrupt, dishonest, and lewd Hebrews. Yet Joseph appears not to have had a very high regard for right and justice, but fully as much as is customary for officers of government to have where kingcraft and priestcraft have sway. (Gen. xli. 48.) In the seven plentiful years he gathered up all the surplus corn; and when the dearth came, and the very people that had made all the corn that he had stored up were starving from want of corn, he made them first pay all their money, (Gen. xlvii. 14, 16–23,) then all their cattle, next all their lands, and finally themselves, to be servants to Pharaoh. The clergy were there, as in every other country, a privileged order, (Gen. xlvii. 22;) they were fed from the public cribs, gratis; so they retained their property and freedom.

CHAPTER V.

THE COMMAND, AND THE TEMPTING. — ADAM DRIVEN OUT OF EDEN. — HUMAN EXISTENCE. — PROPER BUSINESS OF MAN. — WORSHIP.

By the historical account of the Hebrews, as given by Moses, they were directed and governed by God — he directing them where to go, and what to do, and what not to do. Were they well governed? and if not, why not? They were governed by Moses's God — a being made by Moses, to be used by him as he might think would best subserve the interest of himself and his favorites. Then, let us examine the acts and doings of this governor, as given by Moses, his maker, and see if there was any reasonable prospect that such a being would govern any people well. "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." — Gen. ii. 16, 17.

After God had given the above command to Adam, a snake, or, as Moses calls it, a serpent, went to Eve, and asked her if God had not forbidden her and Adam to eat some fruit of the garden. It does not appear that Eve was in the least surprised at the snake's talking, but answered him as follows: "And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall

ye touch it, lest ye die." (Gen. iii. 2, 3.) But the snake told her that they would not surely die; that God knew that when they ate of the fruit of that tree their eyes would be opened, and that they would be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. (Gen. iii. 4, 5.) It does not appear that Eve had received any command on the subject, but it does appear that she received her full share of the harsh and unreasonable curse pronounced against all animate and inanimate nature on the occasion. It is said by some who pretend to know a great deal about the tempting of Eve, and similar transactions, that it was not a snake that talked with Eve in the garden, but that it was the devil, who had assumed the shape of a snake. Moses says that it was a serpent, and gives the reason why the serpent undertook the business: "The serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made." (Gen. iii. 1.) Be that as it may, whether it was a snake or the devil, it, or he, does not appear to have had any bad design against Eve; for there was nothing but the truth told her, as appears by the declaration of God: "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man, and placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life." (Gen. iii. 22, 24.)

Some of the knowing ones say, that man would have

been immortal if he had not eaten of the forbidden fruit; but according to Moses that is a mistake, for he makes God to give as a reason for turning man out of the garden of Eden, "lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever." Reason also declares that he was not to be immortal because he ate; for it certainly would be useless for an immortal being to eat, and therefore unreasonable. The whole of the story of the creation of Adam and Eve, and of the course which it is said God pursued towards them, appears to me a most inconsistent and absurd fable, particularly the latter part of it, that of sending them from the garden, with his harsh and unreasonable curse upon them, and upon every thing that he had made.

We have been organized and brought into our present state of existence without being consulted as to whether it was our wish or not; nor have we any consciousness of our having existed previous to our present organization, which organization gives existence to our mind. Yet, I think, it cannot be reasonably doubted that we always existed, that is, the particles of which we are composed always existed. And all that we actually know about them is, that after we die, their adhesiveness to each other is in part or entirely destroyed; so that they enter into the composition of many other and differently organized bodies. That they do enter into the composition of other bodies of various organization, we know from the fact, that if the flesh of man is eaten by man or beast, by bird, fish, worm, or insect, it will sustain life and add to the growth and weight of that which eats it; or if the flesh or bones of man are let decompose on or near the surface of the ground, it will enrich the ground, so that vegetables will grow better in that ground than they did before such decomposition. And

when the animals and vegetables which have thus got a portion of the particles of matter which had once constituted the body of a human being, are eaten by other animals, or are allowed to decompose on the ground, or in the air, these particles are further scattered; and so on. These facts ought to be examined and well reflected on by those who assert that the very same body that we have at death will rise again and enter into another world. If there be a being capable of controlling matter, and who has formed thereof sensitive organized beings, he must be a wise and powerful being: a wise and powerful being will be a good being, above all rivalry and selfish influence. Whatever such a being does will be just and right; in other words, the best that can be done: for his wisdom will enable him to know the best; his power will enable him, and his goodness will prompt him, to do the best.

If mankind were created or were formed of materials previously existing, by such a being, it appears to me they must have been created or formed for their own happiness; for such beings as we are cannot add to infinite wisdom, or to infinite power, or to infinite goodness. In short, such beings cannot render perfection more perfect; therefore mankind owe no service to such a being as is supposed by many to have created them. The very plain reason why they do not, is, they cannot render any service to such a being; and worship offered to a being which renders no service to that being, is, to say the least, a very questionable duty.

If worship is due to such a being, audible words and external actions appear to me a very inappropriate mode of rendering worship, or of making known our desires and opinions to a being that knows every thing, therefore knows our opinions, our wants, and our desires, without our

expressing them; and he must know, better than we do, whether our desires ought to be gratified or not; and as his goodness and love of justice must prompt him to do the best, it does appear to me not only useless, but absolutely wrong, for such beings as we are to attempt, by supplication or otherwise, to control or influence his action in the premises. The being which I have described as possessing infinite wisdom, infinite power, infinite goodness, and infinite existence, if there be such a being, which I most sincerely believe no human being does or ever did know, must be the true God — a very different being from Moses's God, who possessed large power, little wisdom, and no goodness or love of justice; who countenanced, and sometimes commanded, lying, swindling, theft, fornication, and murder; who was governed by passions such as govern the worst of mankind, doing in his wrath that which he would afterwards repent of, and would swear never to do again, and would be swayed in his actions by prayer rendered by the worst of men, and by the scent of good fat meat broiling or roasting. Now, it is unreasonable to expect any people to be better than the God they worship; if he be dishonest, deceptive, and cruel, it is certainly absurd to expect them to be honest, candid, and friendly.

CHAPTER VI.

MOSES.

THE marriage of Moses's parents, his birth, his being kept hid three months by his mother, and then by her put on the river, &c., &c., I pass over, (Ex. ii. 1, 3;) for although they were historically written by Moses, he could not have had any personal knowledge of the facts; and be they true or false, they do not add to or take from his character as a man. It is his words and actions after he arrived at the age to speak and act for himself that I wish to examine. Moses's first recorded act, after he became a man, is premeditated, wilful murder. "He looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand." (Ex. ii. 12.) It does not appear that Moses made any inquiry or examination as to which of the two that were fighting was wrong; but because one was a Hebrew and the other an Egyptian, he murdered the Egyptian. In reality he had no right to judge between them, and was very candidly told so by one of his countrymen the next day, when he saw two Hebrews fighting, and undertook to rebuke one of them. The man said to him, "Who made thee a prince and judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me as thou killedst the Egyptian?" (Ex. v. 14.) Moses, finding that the murder was known, and that Pharaoh was about to proceed against him for it, left the country. (Ex. v. 15.) Moses, in most of his bad conduct, endeavored to screen himself behind the orders of his God; but for this act, as bad almost

as could be, he made no such excuse; for it was done before he pretended to have received any mission or orders from his God, and we may reasonably conclude before he had created his God. (Ex. iv. 29–31.) His next prominent act was the exciting an insurrection against the authority of Pharaoh, whose predecessors had been the generous benefactors of the Hebrews. It is a well-known fact, that most tales which are mere fables, taken altogether, have their origin in facts partially true. Not only is this the case in tales of world-making, and in the origin and history of ancient nations, hordes, and tribes of mankind, but in ancient and modern tales of fiction on every subject it is so.

Moses's pretensions of having received a mission from God to take the Hebrews out of Egypt, and that in acting under that mission he was governed by the commands of God, I consider an entire fiction; yet it is quite probable that some of the statements which he has made were partially true, but modified or exaggerated so as in his opinion would best subserve the ambitious and tyrannical designs he had formed, and most studiously persevered in. If we consider that the history of the difficulties between the Hebrews and the Egyptians is given by an individual of one of the parties only, without any thing from the other party, and that that individual was an ambitious, tyrannical, and unprincipled person, (and such, I think, is shown to be the character of Moses by the transactions of his whole life, as recorded by himself,) we ought to carefully examine them, and cautiously receive them, if at all, to come any way near the truth of those difficulties. The most reasonable conclusions that I can come at, after a candid examination, are these: —

That the Israelites, or Hebrews, a restless and wandering

horde, being reduced to great want, almost to starvation, were friendlily received by the authorities of Egypt; treated generously by being furnished with lands, and every comfort necessary, if properly applied, to render them happy; and from the history given they became, compared with what they had been, a settled and industrious people during several generations, yet retaining their religious and clannish prejudices; and the Egyptians being equally tenacious of their religious and political opinions, they continued to be two distinct people, notwithstanding their proximity and continual intercourse. Religious prejudices always have been, and are now, the bane of social and friendly intercourse between nations, hordes, tribes, families, and individuals. In a few generations, the Hebrews became numerous, and having retained their clannish idea of being the superior race of the world, — an idea common to almost all barbarians, — and being second only in Egypt, they would, when strong, of course become restless and impatient of restraint of any kind from others; and the Egyptians, knowing the country rightfully belonged to them, and that they had the right and also the power to govern, and seeing the Hebrews were increasing much in strength, and proportionably in ambition, would consequently seek to restrain them, by exacting from them certain amounts of property or labor, or both, to increase the wealth and strength of the Egyptian government, and also to keep down the resources of the Hebrews, so that if they became internal enemies of the Egyptians, they might not be dangerous ones.

CHAPTER VII.

THE REVOLT IN EGYPT.—MOSES.

It was at least fifty years from the time Moses fled from Egypt to escape punishment for the base murder he committed there, until his return in order to instigate his countrymen to revolt against the legal authorities thereof. From the facts stated in his history, it is reasonable to believe that he was between twenty and twenty-five years old when he committed that murder; when he instigated the revolt, he was eighty years old. When he fled from Egypt, he went to Midian, and there married the daughter of Jethro, king and priest of Midian, forming thereby a very important alliance; for Jethro, it appears from the record, was a man of great experience, respectable talents, and great craft. He no doubt assisted Moses in laying his plans for a revolt in Egypt, and also in creating Moses's God. It has been said, that God did not create man in his own image, but that man created God in *his* own image. Moses was a robber, a murderer, and a vindictive tyrant, and he took himself as a model whereby to fashion his God. The Israelites appear not to have been much dissatisfied with their situation among Egyptians, until Moses and Aaron corrupted them to revolt against the legal authorities. "And Moses and Aaron went, and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. And Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people." (Ex. iv. 29.)

"And afterwards Moses and Aaron went in, and told

Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go. And they said, The Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence and with the sword. And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get ye unto your burdens. And Pharaoh said, Behold the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens. And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case, after it was said, Ye shall not minish aught from your bricks of your daily task. And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh: and they said unto them, The Lord look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savor to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hands to slay us. And after they had got some distance on their journey leaving Egypt, and the Egyptians following after them, they became sore afraid, and cried unto the Lord. And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness." (Ex. v. 1–5, 19–21; xiv. 12.)

The foregoing quotations, taken from Moses's own account of the rebellion in Egypt, show clearly that the

Hebrews were not heavily oppressed, nor much dissatisfied with their situation in Egypt until they were corrupted by Moses and Aaron — being deceived by Moses's pretended mission from God.

Notwithstanding Moses's great ambition and craft, he lacked one very necessary qualification in him who aspires to be leader and director of any large body of people — eloquence. He was "slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." (Ex. iv. 10.) But it was said that Aaron could "speak well;" which made it necessary for Moses to associate Aaron with himself in his mission; and their subsequent history demonstrates that Aaron was not inferior to his brother in craft, if he was in courage. The miracles which Moses declares he and his brother wrought against Pharaoh, by command of God, are humbugs interlarded through his history to cover up his base designs as much as possible, which were to induce his countrymen, by declaring to them the great advantages and happiness they would attain in a foreign land, to put themselves with their families and property under his direction and command; in which he, unfortunately for the people, succeeded; for he kept them wandering from place to place until the whole generation was extinct — having, during all that time, made slaves and tools of the men in robbing and murdering every people he could find not well prepared to defend themselves.

After Moses and Aaron had, by their pretended mission and commands from God to their superstitious clansmen, and the legerdemain tricks they played off before them, obtained their consent to leave Egypt, the next consideration must of course have been how to get them from under the authority of the government, for they were not strong enough to accomplish it by force; they had, therefore, to resort to stratagem; and the scheme determined on

was the pretence that it was necessary for them and their people to go a three days' journey into the wilderness to worship their God. The king did not believe them; but he said, "Ye are idle, ye are idle; therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord." (Ex. v. 17.) After considerable solicitation Pharaoh consented to let the men go and worship; but that would not do; their families must go also; which Pharaoh, after some time, consented to. Then, as their God was a being of most violent passions, and inveterately revengeful, requiring large bribes to keep his anger down, they declared they must take their flocks and herds, the whole of them, as they did not know what part he would require of them; that it was necessary for them to worship him aright, "lest he fall upon us with pestilence, and with the sword." (Ex. v. 3.)

This, at last, Pharaoh also granted. It is stated that he said to Moses and Aaron, "Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel: and go serve the Lord, as ye said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye said: and bless me also. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and raiment. And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required: and they spoiled the Egyptians. And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot, that were men, besides children. And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle. . . . And it was told the King of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" (Ex. xii. 31–38; xiv. 5.)

From the preceding extracts, and from the conduct of Pharaoh and his people towards the Hebrews and their leaders, it appears they were entirely deceived by Moses and Aaron as to their intended object, which was — after they had obtained Pharaoh's leave, and dressed their people richly with raiment and jewels obtained from the Egyptians, under pretence of going three days' journey to worship their God — to proceed the three days' journey under that false pretence, and then to continue their journey until they were quite out of the power of Pharaoh and his people, by which they would not only obtain their independence of Pharaoh, but would also swindle their kind neighbors of their best raiment, jewels, and other valuables, which they had borrowed of them under the false pretence of going to worship. By that hypocritical manœuvring, Moses and his people must have gained at least six days' advance of any force that Pharaoh could send in pursuit of them; for it could not be known that they "fled" until the fourth day after they had departed, and then only by those who had accompanied them; for they had the privilege of three days' journey. Six days the advance was quite time enough for them to select such routes as would effectually preclude Pharaoh's pursuit; for Pharaoh's great parade of six hundred chariots was of no use to him when he reached the wilderness. The most reasonable conclusion is, that Pharaoh's object in pursuing the Israelites was to chastise them for their treachery; and the object of his people was to again get possession of their jewels, their raiment, and other valuables, which the Israelites had swindled them of; and that they had no wish to take back to Egypt a multitude of semi-savages that an experience of about two hundred years (Moses says four hundred and thirty years) had convinced them could not be elevated

to a state of civilization and moral rectitude equal to the other citizens.

Rollin, in his Ancient History, says, "Egypt was ever considered by all the ancients as the most renowned school for wisdom and politics, and the source from whence most arts and sciences were derived. This kingdom bestowed its noblest labors and its finest arts on the improvement of mankind; and Greece was so sensible of this, that its most illustrious men, as Homer, Pythagoras, Plato, even its great legislators Lycurgus and Solon, with many more whom it is useless to mention, travelled into Egypt to complete their studies, and draw from that fountain whatsoever was most rare and valuable in every kind of learning. God himself has given this kingdom a glorious testimony: when praising Moses, he says of him, that he 'was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.'

"The Egyptians were the first people who rightly understood the rules of government. A nation so grave and serious immediately perceived that the end of politics is to make life easy and a people happy. The kingdom was hereditary; but, according to Diodorus, the Egyptian princes conducted themselves in a different manner from what is usually seen in other monarchies, where the prince acknowledges no other rule of his actions than his own arbitrary will and pleasure. But here kings were under greater restraint from the laws than their subjects. They had some particular ones designated by a former monarch that composed part of what the Egyptians called *the sacred books.* Thus every thing being settled by ancient custom, they never sought to live in a way different from their ancestors. No slave or foreigner was admitted into the immediate service of the prince; such a post was too important to be intrusted to any persons except those who were the most

distinguished by their birth, and had received the most excellent education — to the end, that, as they had the liberty of approaching the king's person day and night, he might, from men so qualified, hear nothing which was unbecoming the royal majesty, nor have any sentiments instilled into him but such as were of a noble and generous kind. For (adds Diodorus) it is very rarely seen that kings fly out into any vicious excess except those who approach them approve their irregularities, or serve as instruments to their passions. The kings of Egypt freely permitted not only the quality and proportion of what they ate and drank to be prescribed them, (a thing customary in Egypt, whose inhabitants were all sober, and whose air inspired frugality,) but even that their hours, and almost every action, should be under the regulation of the laws. In the morning, at daybreak, when the head is clearest, and the thoughts most unperplexed, they read the several letters they received, to form a more just and distinct idea of the affairs which were to come under their consideration that day. As soon as they were dressed they went to the daily sacrifice performed in the temple, where, surrounded with their whole court, and the victims placed before the altar, they assisted at the prayer pronounced aloud by the high priest, in which he asked the gods health and all other blessings for the king, because he governed his people with clemency and justice, and made the laws of his kingdom the rule and standard of his actions. The high priest entered into a long enumeration of his royal virtues, observing that he was religious to the gods, affable to men; moderate, just, magnanimous, sincere; an enemy to falsehood; liberal; master of his passions; punishing crimes with the utmost lenity, but boundless in rewarding merit. He next speaks the faults which kings might be guilty of, but supposing, at

the same time, that they never committed any except by surprise or ignorance; and loaded with imprecations such of their ministers as gave them ill counsel and suppressed or disguised the truth.

"Such were the methods of conveying instruction to their kings. It was thought that reproaches would only sour their tempers, and that the most effectual method to inspire them with virtue would be to point out their duty in praises conformable to the sense of the laws, and pronounced in a solemn manner before the gods. After the prayers of the sacrifices were ended, the counsels and actions of great men were read to the king out of the sacred books, in order that he might govern his dominions according to their maxims, and maintain the laws which had made his predecessors and their subjects happy. I have already observed that the quantity, as well as quality, of what he ate or drank was prescribed by the laws to the king. His table was covered with nothing but the most common food, because eating, in Egypt, was designed not to tickle the palate, but to satisfy the cravings of nature. One would have concluded (observes the historian) that these rules had been laid down by some able physician, who was attentive only to the health of the prince, rather than by a legislator. The same simplicity was seen in all other things; and we read in Plutarch of a temple in Thebes which had one of its pillars inscribed with imprecations against that king who first introduced profusion and luxury into Egypt. The principal duty of kings, and their most essential function, is the administering justice to their subjects. Accordingly the kings of Egypt cultivated more immediately this duty, convinced that on this depended not only the ease and comfort of individuals, but the happiness of the state; which would be a herd of robbers rather than

a kingdom, should the weak be unprotected, and the powerful enabled by their riches and influence to commit crimes with impunity. Different animals were sacrificed in different countries; but one common and general ceremony was observed in all sacrifices, viz., the laying of hands upon the head of the victim, loading it at the same time with imprecations, and praying the gods to divert upon that victim all the calamities which might threaten Egypt."

It cannot be supposed that a people who were, as represented in the foregoing short extracts of history, so civilized and moral, would be very anxious to retain among them a nation of demi-savages that long experience had demonstrated could not be divested of their clannish prejudices, and who worshipped a God who they feared would fall upon them with pestilence, or with the sword, unless they gave him plenty of beef and mutton. "And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword. . . . Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not a hoof be left behind; for thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God; and we know not with what we must serve the Lord, until we come hither." (Ex. v. 3; x. 26.) With respect to the sacrifices of the Egyptians, and of the Hebrews, the difference of the one from the other, and their apparent different objects, I will notice when I come to examine some of the sacrifices instituted by Moses.

I have said before that the Egyptians had an experience of about two hundred years — Moses says four hundred and thirty years — with the Hebrews. To make out four hundred and thirty years, the Bible chronologist and commentators reckon from the time that it is said, "And there was

a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was very grievous in the land." (Gen. xii. 10.) The going down of Abram into Egypt was more than two hundred years before Jacob and his sons moved into Egypt to dwell there. Abram remained in Egypt only about a year, whereas Moses says, "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years." (Ex. xii. 40.)

Josephus says that it was two hundred and twenty years from the death of Isaac to the exodus out of Egypt. The death of Isaac took place some time before Joseph was sold into Egypt. Joseph was about seventeen years old when he was sold by his brethren; he was thirty years old at the commencing of the seven plentiful years; and as Jacob did not move into Egypt until some time after the famine commenced, Joseph must have been nearly or quite forty years old when his father took up his abode in Egypt. If Josephus's declaration be correct, that it was two hundred and twenty years from the death of Isaac to the exodus out of Egypt, then it must have been something less than two hundred years from the time that Jacob went to dwell in Egypt until his offspring were taken out of that country by Moses and Aaron.

Rollin states that Jacob and his family went into Egypt about the year before Jesus Christ 1706, and that the Israelites departed out of Egypt about the year before Jesus Christ 1510, being something less than two hundred years that they remained there. I consider it of very little importance which of these historians is nearest right. Josephus and Rollin no doubt honestly give what they considered correct history, for we can see no interest they could have had in doing otherwise; but Moses's whole course shows that his principal object was to deceive and

enslave the mass of his own countrymen, and to rob those of every other nation that he possibly could.

As before observed, Moses and Aaron and their people must have had at least six days the advance of Pharaoh and his people. When Pharaoh found that a large part of his force, his six hundred chariots, was, by the nature of the country, rendered useless, he, most likely being glad that he was rid of the Israelites, — for he had a densely inhabited kingdom, and they had occupied a large parcel of his best lands, and had become restless and troublesome, — returned home, leaving them to pursue their course, which was, to send out spies in order to ascertain where there was a people not well prepared to defend themselves; and when they had found such, to attack, plunder, and murder them.

CHAPTER VIII.

JETHRO. — MOUNT SINAI. — MOSES.

I WILL now review some of their exploits, as related by Moses himself. "And Jethro, Moses's father-in-law, came with his two sons and his wife unto Moses in the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God: And he said unto Moses, I, thy father-in-law Jethro, am come unto thee, and thy wife and her two sons with her. And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent. . . . And Jethro, Moses's father-in-law, took a burnt-offering and sacrifice for God: And Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses's

father-in-law before God. And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: And the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening. And when Moses's father-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? Why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even? And Moses said unto his father-in-law, Because the people come unto me to inquire of God: When they have a matter they come unto me, and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God, and his laws. And Moses's father-in-law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou and this people that is with thee; for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. Hearken now unto my voice; I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God: And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. Moreover, thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burdens with thee. If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall go to their place in peace. So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said." (Ex. xviii. 5–23.)

Jethro was an old man of experience, king and priest of the Midianites; of course well versed in deceiving and governing the people. And Moses, much approving his scheme, adopted it; and to prepare the people for the change, determined to make a great exhibition of the power and the wonder of his God, and of his commands to the people concerning what was necessary for them to do towards carrying into operation the new order of things.

Mount Sinai was made the place of rendezvous. But fearing that the people might have the curiosity to see and to know what was really going on, Moses declared it necessary to "set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it." To keep the people back, "lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish," Moses gave his people three days' notice of his intended great show, which time we may reasonably suppose was used by him and Aaron in preparing things so as to make as imposing an appearance at the exhibition as possible. "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And the Lord said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee; but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the Lord, lest he break forth upon them. So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them." (Ex. xix. 12–25.) And then Moses goes on to declare unto the people a great many laws and commands, which he said he had received of God for them, with promises of great benefits if they be but obedient. "Behold I send an angel before thee, to keep

thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and all that I speak, then will I be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries."

Moses having established his new system of government, his first great movement under it was to swindle his countrymen out of the gold, silver, and other valuables which he had made them plunder from the Egyptians; for which purpose he put forward the following command of his God: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering; of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart, ye shall take my offering. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them: gold, and silver, and brass; and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goat's hair; and ram skins dyed red, and badger skins, and shittim wood; oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense; onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate. And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." (Ex. xxv. 1–8.)

The next most important matter with Moses, after he had secured to himself the gold, silver, and other valuables plundered from the Egyptians, appears to have been to make provision for his brother Aaron and his sons, which he did by installing them into the priest's office, to be holden by them and their descendants in perpetuity. Another very important matter was, to make sufficient and lasting provision for the priests and the principal officers of the government. This Moses did by instituting the great number of sacrifices and gifts, which he declared that God required of the people. The sacrifices of the Egyptians,

and those instituted by Moses, were very different in the matter, means, and ceremonies for carrying them into effect; but not more so than were the different objects intended to be accomplished by them severally. The object of the Egyptians' sacrifices, or ceremonies, was to rid the people, or at least to make them believe that they would be in part, if not altogether, rid of their sins, by having them placed by the priest on a beast, and they praying to the gods that they would visit on that beast the penalties of those sins; whereas it plainly appears that Moses's object was to make the Hebrews pay heavily for their sins, and as heavily when there was no sin, thereby establishing a sumptuous and lasting support for the priests and principal officers of government. Yet there was one sacrifice, or ceremony, used by Moses, which appears to be identical in execution and object with that used by the Egyptians, except that the Egyptians used any beast, and Moses only used the goat. The sacrifice, or ceremony, of the scape goat, Moses evidently learned in Egypt.

Rollin says, "Menes, whom all historians declare to be the first king of Egypt, was the institutor of the worship of the gods, and of the ceremonies of the sacrifices. . . . Different animals were used in different countries, but one common and general ceremony was observed in all sacrifices, viz., the laying of hands upon the head of the victim, loading it at the same time with imprecations, and praying the gods to divert upon that victim all the calamities which threaten Egypt."

"And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat; and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their

transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited; and he shall let go the goat into the wilderness." (Lev. xvi. 20, 21.)

To understand the object of the almost innumerable sacrifices and offerings which Moses required the Israelites to make, it is necessary to read the history of them given by Moses himself, and to candidly, freely, and impartially examine the actions of Moses and his priests in the premises. I think, whoever will do this, must arrive at the same conclusion that I long since did, which is, that so great a pack of mummery, legerdemain tricks, and ceremonies of deception cannot be found in the history of any other people. They are quite too numerous and lengthy for me to copy, but they can be read in the Bible. I will, however, copy some of the offerings which enabled him to swindle his people out of what he had made them plunder from the Egyptians, and of much other property: —

"And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. And they came every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whose spirit made him willing-hearted, and they brought the Lord's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing-hearted, and brought bracelets and ear-rings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold; and every man that offered, offered an offering of gold unto the Lord. And every man with whom there was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers' skins, brought them. Every one that did offer an

offering of silver and brass, brought the Lord's offering: and every man with whom was found shittim wood, for any work of the service, brought it. And all the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom, spun goat's hair. And the rulers brought onyx stones, and stones to be set for the ephod and for the breastplate, and spice, and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense. The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the Lord, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring, for all manner of work which the Lord had commanded to be made by the hands of Moses." (Ex. xxxv. 21–29.)

CHAPTER IX.

NUMBERING THE PEOPLE. — TRIBE OF LEVI. — MOSES'S GUARD.

Moses, having gotten his Jethro-government somewhat established, commenced preparations for further murdering and plundering his neighbors, by taking an enumeration of his people.

"From twenty years old and upwards, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel, thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies. As the Lord commanded Moses, so he numbered them in the wilderness of Sinai. Those of Reuben, the eldest son of Israel, were forty-six thousand and five hundred; of Simeon, fifty-nine thousand and three

hundred; of Gad, forty-five thousand six hundred and fifty; of Judah, seventy-four thousand six hundred; of Issachar, fifty-four thousand and four hundred; of Zebulun, fifty-seven thousand and four hundred; of Joseph, first, Ephraim, forty thousand and five hundred; second, Manasseh, thirty-two thousand and two hundred: making of Joseph seventy-two thousand and seven hundred; of Benjamin, thirty-five thousand and four hundred; of Dan, sixty-two thousand and seven hundred; of Asher, forty-one thousand and five hundred; of Naphtali, fifty-three thousand and four hundred: making of those that were numbered six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty. But the Levites, after the tribe of their fathers, were not numbered among them." (Num. i. 3–19.)

The dissatisfaction that so often appeared among the people, and their tendency to revolt against his authority, convinced Moses that his Jethro-government was not a full and infallible protection to his usurpations. He therefore determined to set around the priesthood and the government, as guards, the whole tribe of Levi, of which he and Aaron were a part.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him. And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle. And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons; and they are wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel. And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest's office; and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death. And the chief of the house of the father of the families of Merari was Zuriel, the son of Abihail: these shall pitch on the side of the tabernacle north-

ward. And under the custody and charge of the sons of Merari shall be the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and the sockets thereof, and the vessels thereof, and all that serveth thereto, and the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords. But those that encamp before the tabernacle towards the east, even before the tabernacle of the congregation eastward, shall be Moses, and Aaron, and his sons, keeping the charge of the sanctuary, for the charge of the children of Israel; and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death. All that were numbered of the Levites, which Moses and Aaron numbered at the command of the Lord, throughout their families, all the males from one month and upwards were twenty and two thousand.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the Levites instead of all the first born among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle; and the Levites shall be mine: I am the Lord. And of those that are to be redeemed of the two hundred and threescore and thirteen of the first born of the children of Israel, which are more than the Levites, thou shalt even take five shekels apiece by the poll, after the shekel of the sanctuary shalt thou take them: the shekel is twenty gerahs. And thou shalt give the money wherewith the odd number is to be redeemed unto Aaron and his sons. And Moses took the redemption money of them that were over and above them that were redeemed by the Levites: of the first born of the children of Israel took he the money, a thousand three hundred and threescore and five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary. And Moses gave the money of them that were redeemed unto Aaron, and to his sons, according to the word of the Lord, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Take the sum of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, after their families, by the house of their fathers; from thirty years old and upward, even until fifty years old, all that enter into the host to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation. This shall be the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation, about the most holy things. And when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come, and his sons, and they shall take down the covering vail, and cover the ark of testimony with it: and shall put thereon the covering of badgers' skins, and shall spread over it a cloth wholly of blue, and shall put in the staves thereof. And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward, after that the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it: but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die. These things are the burden of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation. And to the office of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, pertaineth the oil for the light, and the sweet incense, and the daily meat offering, and the anointing oil, and the oversight of all the tabernacle, and of all that therein is, in the sanctuary, and in the vessels thereof.

"All those that were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron and the chiefs of Israel numbered, after their families, and after the house of their fathers, from thirty years and upwards, even unto fifty years old, every one that came to do service of the ministry, and the service of the burden in the tabernacle of the congregation, even those that were numbered of them were eight thousand and five hundred and fourscore. According to the commandment of the Lord, they were numbered by the hand of Moses, every one according to his service and according to

his burden. Thus were they numbered of him, as the Lord had commanded Moses." (Num. iii. 5–51 ; iv. 1–49.)

Moses having selected his guard, that is, eight thousand five hundred and eighty of his own tribe, between the ages of thirty and fifty years old, and appointed their duties, so as to protect the treasure and persons of the priests and of the officers of government, it then became necessary for him to make ample and lasting provision for their support, which he did in part as follows : —

" And it came to pass the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle, and had anointed it and sanctified it, and all the instruments thereof, both the altar and all the vessels thereof, and anointed them and sanctified them, that the princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers, who were the princes of the tribes, and were over them that were numbered, offered ; and they brought their offering before the Lord, six covered wagons and twelve oxen ; a wagon for two of the princes, and for each one an ox ; and they brought them before the tabernacle. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take it of them, that they may be to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation ; and thou shalt give them unto the Levites, to every man according to his service. And Moses took the wagons and oxen and gave them unto the Levites : two wagons and four oxen he gave unto the sons of Gershon, according to their service ; and four wagons and eight oxen he gave unto the sons of Merari, according unto their service, under the hand of Ithamar, the son of Aaron the priest. But unto the sons of Kohath he gave none, because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them was that they should bear it upon their shoulders. And the princes offered for dedicating the altar in the day that it was anointed, even the princes offered their offering before the altar.

And the Lord said unto Moses, They shall offer their offering, each prince on his day, for the dedicating of the altar.

"And he that offered his offering the first day was Nahshon, the son of Aminadab, of the tribe of Judah. And his offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: both of them were full of fine flour, mingled with oil, for a meat offering; one spoon of ten shekels of gold, full of incense; one young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering; one kid of the goats for a sin offering; and for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Nahshon, the son of Aminadab. On the second day, Nathaneel, the son of Zuar, prince of Issachar, did offer. He offered for his offering one silver charger, the weight whereof was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour, mingled with oil, for a meat offering; one spoon of gold, of ten shekels, full of incense; one young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering; one kid of the goats for a sin offering; and for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Nathaneel, the son of Zuar."

The same offerings as were offered by the two above-named princes were offered by ten other princes, being twelve in the whole; and their joint offering is thus spoken of:—

"This was the dedication of the altar (in the day when it was anointed) by the princes of Israel: twelve chargers of silver, twelve silver bowls, twelve spoons of gold: each charger of silver weighing a hundred and thirty shekels:

each bowl seventy; all the silver vessels weighed two thousand and four hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; the golden spoons were twelve, full of incense, weighing ten shekels apiece, after the shekel of the sanctuary: all the gold of the spoons was a hundred and twenty shekels. All the oxen for the burnt offering were twelve bullocks, the rams twelve, the lambs of the first year twelve, with their meat offering, and the kids of the goats for a sin offering twelve. And all the oxen for the sacrifice of the peace offering were twenty and four bullocks, the rams sixty, the he goats sixty, the lambs of the first year sixty. This was the dedication of the altar, after it was anointed.

"And the Lord said unto Aaron, Thou, and thy sons, and thy father's house with thee, shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary; and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood. And thy brethren also, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee; but thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the tabernacle of witness. I have given your priest's office unto you as a gift; and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death. And the Lord spake unto Aaron, Behold, I also have given thee the charge of my heave offerings of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel; unto thee have I given them by reason of the anointing, and to thy sons by an ordinance forever. This shall be thine of the most holy things reserved from fire: every oblation of theirs, every meat offering of theirs, and sin offering of theirs, and every trespass offering of theirs, which they shall render unto me, shall be most holy for thee, and for thy sons. In the most holy place shalt thou eat it; every male shall eat of it; it shall be holy unto thee. And this is thine, the

heave offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel: I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons, and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute forever: every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it. All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the first fruits of them which they shall offer unto the Lord, them have I given unto thee. And whatsoever is first ripe in the land, which they shall bring in to the Lord, shall be thine: every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it. Every thing devoted in Israel shall be thine.

"And behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin, and die. But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance. But the tithes of the children of Israel which they offer as a heave offering unto the Lord I have given unto the Levites to inherit; therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When you take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up a heave offering of it for the Lord, even the tenth part of the tithe. And this your heave offering shall be reckoned unto you as though it were the corn of the threshing floor, and as the fulness of the wine press. Thus ye also shall offer a heave offering unto the Lord of all your tithes which ye

receive of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof the Lord's heave offering to Aaron the priest. Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave offering of the Lord of all the best thereof, even the hallowed parts thereof out of it. Therefore thou shalt say unto them, When ye have heaved the best thereof from it, then it shall be counted unto the Levites as the increase of the threshing floor, and as the increase of the wine press. And ye shall eat it in every place, ye and your households; for it is your reward for your service in the tabernacle of the congregation." (Num. vii. 1–88; xviii. 1–31.)

Moses, having alienated the whole tribe of Levites from the rest of the Israelites, by selecting them as guards to stand around and protect himself and his brother Aaron, and such as they might associate in the government and in the priest's office with themselves, and by making large and lasting provision, to be taken from the hard earnings of their countrymen, for the support of those guards, he thereby established a government the most corrupt, tyrannical, and oppressive of any government that we have any record of. Even those that were considered the most trustworthy friends that the principal chief and the priesthood had were forbidden, under the penalty of death, to touch, or even to come near unto, the government and the priestly machinery, by which the principal chief and the priests were surrounded, until parts of that machinery were securely covered by one of the priests; and then the priests directed the guards, who were also the carriers, how and where to carry the same, those carriers being entirely dependent for their support on the faithful performance of their duty according to the command given them.

CHAPTER X.

REVOLT AGAINST MOSES AND AARON — THEIR TYRANNY.

That Moses was not mistaken when he calculated on his usurpations being resisted, by a part of the people at least, is clearly exhibited by the following historical declarations: "Now, Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi; and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Elial; and On, the son of Peleth, son of Reuben, took men; and they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty of the princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown. And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them; wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" Here Moses remonstrated with them, particularly with Korah. "And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi: Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you to himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren, the sons of Levi, with thee; and seek ye the priesthood also? For which cause both thou and all the company are gathered together against the Lord: and what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him?

And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, which said, We will not come up. Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that flowed with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us? Moreover, thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up. And Moses was very wroth, and said unto the Lord, Respect not their offering. I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them." (Num. xvi. 1–15.) Then Moses goes on to give a long, and evidently a fabulous statement, concerning what was done with those mutineers. All that can be gathered from the statements there made, that carry any thing like truth and reason, is, that the whole, the three leaders with their wives and children, and their two hundred and fifty followers, were put to death, and that that putting to death was considered by the whole people of Israel tyrannical and unjust. "But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord." (Num. xvi. 41.) And for that honest expression of their opinion, there were fourteen thousand and seven hundred more of them put to death by those brutal murderers, Moses and his brother Aaron, and by the men whom they had, by corruption and bribery, induced to support them in their usurpations and tyranny.

Moses, having by his exactions swindled his countrymen and women of their gold and silver, and other valuables, and a large part of their flocks and herds, and having suppressed their insurrection by murdering a large number of them, was ready for new expeditions of murdering and plundering his neighbors. I shall notice but one of them,

which I think will be quite sufficient to show the mode and object of his operations, and to clearly demonstrate the base and depraved principles of the man; after which I shall take some notice of the movements of Joshua, his successor. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites; afterwards shalt thou be gathered to thy people. And Moses spake unto the people, saying, Arm some of yourselves unto the war, and let them go against the Midianites, and avenge the Lord of Midian. Of every tribe a thousand, throughout all the tribes of Israel, shall ye send to the war. So there were delivered out of the thousands of Israel, a thousand of every tribe, twelve thousand armed for war. And Moses sent them to the war, a thousand of every tribe, them and Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest, to the war, with the holy instruments and the trumpets to blow in his hand. And they warred against the Midianites, as the Lord commanded Moses, and they slew all the males. And they slew the kings of Midian, besides the rest of them that were slain, namely, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian; Balaam, also, the son of Beor, they slew with the sword. And the children of Israel took all the women of Midian captives, and their little ones, and took the spoil of all their cattle, and their flocks, and all their goods. And they burnt all their cities wherein they dwelt, and all their goodly castles, with fire. And they took all the spoil, and all the prey, both of men and beasts. And they brought the captives, and the prey, and the spoil, unto Moses and Eleazar the priest, and unto the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the camp at the plains of Moab, which are by Jordan near Jericho. And Moses and Eleazar the priest, and all the princes of the congregation, went forth to meet them without the camp. And Moses

was wroth with the officers of the host, with the captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, which were come from the battle. And Moses said unto them, Have ye saved all the women alive? Behold, these caused the children of Israel to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord. Now, therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known a man by lying with him. But all the women-children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the sum of the prey that was taken, both of man and of beast, thou and Eleazar the priest, and the chief fathers of the congregation; and divide the prey into two parts between them that took the war upon them, who went out to battle, and between all the congregation; and levy a tribute unto the Lord of the men of war which went out to battle, one soul of five hundred, both of the persons, and of the beeves, and of the asses, and of the sheep; take it of their half, and give it to Eleazar the priest, for a heave offering of the Lord. And of the children of Israel's half, thou shalt take one portion of fifty, of the persons, of the beeves, of the asses, and of the flocks of all manner of beasts, and give them unto the Levites which keep the charge of the tabernacle of the Lord. And Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the Lord commanded Moses. And the booty, being the rest of the prey which the men of war had caught, was six hundred thousand and seventy thousand and five thousand sheep, and threescore and twelve thousand beeves, and three score and one thousand asses, and thirty and two thousand persons in all, of women that had not known a man by lying with him. And the half which was the

portion of them that went out to war, was in number three hundred thousand and seven and thirty thousand and five hundred sheep. And the Lord's tribute of the sheep was six hundred and threescore and fifteen. And the beeves were thirty and six thousand, of which the Lord's tribute was threescore and twelve. And the asses were thirty thousand and five hundred, of which the Lord's tribute was threescore and one. And the persons were sixteen thousand, of which the Lord's tribute was thirty and two persons. And Moses gave the tribute, which was the Lord's heave offering, unto Eleazar the priest, as the Lord commanded Moses. And the children of Israel's half, which Moses divided from the men that warred, (now the half that pertained unto the congregation was three hundred thousand and thirty thousand and seven thousand and five hundred sheep, and thirty and six thousand beeves, and thirty thousand and five hundred asses, and sixteen thousand persons,) even the children of Israel's half, Moses took one portion of fifty, both of man and beast, and gave them to the Levites, which kept the charge of the tabernacle of the Lord, as the Lord commanded Moses. And the officers which were over thousands of the hosts, the captains over thousands, and the captains over hundreds, came near unto Moses. And they said unto Moses, Thy servants have taken the sum of the men of war, which are under our charge, and there lacketh not one man of us. We have therefore brought an oblation for the Lord, what every man hath gotten, of jewels of gold, chains, and bracelets, rings, earrings, and tablets, to make an atonement for our souls before the Lord. And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of them, even all wrought jewels. And all the gold of the offering that they offered up to the Lord, of the captains over thousands, and the captains over hun-

dreds, was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels. (For the men of war had taken spoil, every man for himself.) And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of the captains of thousands, and of hundreds, and brought it into the tabernacle of the congregation for a memorial for the children of Israel before the Lord." (Num. xxxi. 1–54.)

That was the last of Moses's great military, or more properly murderous, expeditions; after which he resigned his exalted situation, and installed Joshua chief murderer. Now, let any reasonable being, whether his or her intellect, education, and opportunity for gaining information be large or small, candidly and freely examine and meditate on that closing scene of Moses's long and abominably wicked career, and determine within his or her own mind whether it is possible for him or her to worship a being, be he called King, Majesty, God, or any other great name, who would order and participate in such most infamous transactions as are here recorded. But is any person at liberty to candidly and freely examine any thing contained in that book called by Jews, Christians, Mahometans, and Mormons the "Holy Bible," while ten thousand times ten thousand clergy, and the tools of clergy, are continually screaming into the ears of the people that if they dare doubt the truth of any thing contained in that "holy book" they will be cast into hell, and there punished in burning brimstone to all eternity? Moses, as a law maker, was a compound of much bad and little good. Some few of his laws are tolerably good, when we consider the state of society at the time they were made; many of them bad in any state of society; very few mild; a very large number unjust and tyrannical, some in the extreme. One of the last description I will give, and then let Moses sleep, at least for the present, with the other base

tyrants, the giving of whose history to the world has tended much to corrupt and brutalize mankind.

"If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the Lord thy God giveth thee, man or woman that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the Lord thy God, in transgressing his covenant, and have gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded, and it be told to thee, and thou hast heard it, and inquired diligently, and behold it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel, then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman which have committed that wicked thing unto thy gates, even that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones till they die." (Deut. xvii. 2.)

Such is one of the many of Moses's unjust and cruel laws — a barbarous and painful death inflicted upon men and women for daring to worship otherwise than he had commanded; and the deleterious effect on morals of that and such like abominable laws are working injustice, corruption, and misery in every civilized country on earth at this day.

CHAPTER XI.

JOSHUA.

JOSHUA, in planning and in executing his first expedition against his neighbors, showed himself a worthy successor of his prototype, Moses.

"And Joshua, the son of Nun, sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho; and they went, and came into a harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there. And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold there came men in hither to-night of the children of Israel to search out the country. And the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee which are entered into thy house, for they came to search out all the country. And the woman took the two men and hid them, and said thus: There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were. And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly, for ye shall overtake them. But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them within the stalks of flax which she had laid in order upon the roof. And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords; and as soon as they which pursued were gone out, they shut the gate. And before they were lain down she came up unto them upon the roof, and she said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that our terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you; for

we have heard how the Lord dried up the waters of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt, and what ye did to the two kings of the Amorites that were on the other side of Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we heard these things our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man because of you; for the Lord your God he is God in heaven above and in the earth beneath. Now, therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord, since I have showed you kindness, that you will show kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token; and that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.

"And the men answered her, Our life for yours if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be when the Lord hath given us the land that we will deal kindly and truly with thee. Then she let them down by a cord through the window; for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall. And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you, and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned; and afterward may ye go your way. And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear. Behold, when we come into the land thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by; and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee. And it shall be that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless; and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head if any hand be upon him;

and if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear. And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window. And they went, and came into the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers returned; and the pursuers sought them throughout all the way, but found them not. So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all things that befell them. And they said unto Joshua, Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land, for even all the inhabitants do faint because of us."

"Now Jericho was straitly shut up, because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in. And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priest took up the ark of the Lord. And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord went on continually, and blew with the trumpets; and the armed men went before them; but the rearward came after the ark of the Lord, the priests going on and blowing with the trumpets. And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp. So they did six days. And it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout, for the Lord hath given you the city; and the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the Lord: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. And ye in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed,

when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the Lord: they shall come into the treasury of the Lord. So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it came to pass when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. And they utterly destroyed all that were in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword. But Joshua had said unto the men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her. And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel. And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein: only the silver and gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day, because she hid the messengers which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho."

"Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow, for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies until ye take away the accursed thing from among you. In the morning, therefore, ye shall be brought according to your tribes; and it shall be that the tribe which the Lord taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the

Lord shall take shall come by households; and the household which the Lord shall take shall come man by man; and it shall be that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all he hath, because he hath transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel. So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken. And he brought the family of Judah: and he took the family of the Zarhites: and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man; and Zabdi was taken: and he brought his household man by man; and Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done: hide it not from me. And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done. When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them, and behold they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it. So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent, and behold it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it. And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto the children of Israel, and laid them out before the Lord. And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons and daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble

you this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger: wherefore the name of that place was called, The Valley of Achor, unto this day." (Joshua ii. 1–24; vi. 1–25; vii. 13–26.)

Here is the first expedition of Joshua against his neighbors. A treaty made by two spies of the one side, and a traitorous harlot of the other side, delivered up to the brute commander of the first side a large and wealthy city belonging to the king and people of the second side; and the inhabitants of the city were inhumanly butchered,—men, women, and children; not one left alive, except that harlot who had betrayed her king and her country. She, and her father, and her father's household were kept alive, and all their property secured to them, and they received by and dwelt among the murderers of their country people. After the murder, the spoils were gathered and the city burned. Notwithstanding the examples set by that wholesale murderer and robber, Joshua, he had not the least sympathy for those who attempted to profit by his examples; for one of his own men, Achan, who had attempted to appropriate to his own use a part of the spoils of which Jericho had been plundered, Joshua had him, his sons, and daughters, though he confessed his guilt and gave up the property, taken into a valley and there stoned by all Israel, and then burned them. The manner of getting up and of executing his expedition against Jericho most emphatically demonstrates the entire absence of humanity and honesty in the composition of Joshua. I will not therefore follow his historian through all his details of murders and robberies, but will merely copy a list of the kings which that

historian says Joshua smote, which, I suppose, means that he murdered and robbed them, and all their subjects that he could:—

"The king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which is beside Beth-el, one; the king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one; the king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one; the king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one; the king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; the king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one; the king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one; the king of Makkedah, one; the king of Beth-el, one; the king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hepher, one; the king of Aphek, one; the king of Lasharon, one; the king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one; the king of Shimron-meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one; the king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one; the king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam of Carmel, one; the king of Dor in the coast of Dor, one; the king of the nations of Gilgal, one; the king of Tirzar, one; all the kings, thirty and one." (Josh. xii. 9.)

The principal object of both Moses and Joshua, in their infamous murders and robberies, judging from their acts, and one which they kept a watchful eye upon, was, to enrich the government and the priesthood, and thereby render their power omnipotent over their people. To accomplish that object fully, it was necessary that the most valuable part of all plunderings and robberies should, by some means or other, be placed at the disposal of the officers of the government and the priests, and also that there should be a place prepared to receive the same; which place should be considered too sacred for any of the people to examine, or touch, or even to come near unto; and Moses, whose mind was very fertile in expedients, furnished the means to accomplish both these desired objects. The sacri-

fices, offerings, and gifts were instituted and established by him; he collected all things which were most valuable, and deposited them with the officers of the government and the priests; and the sanctuary, made for Moses's God to dwell in, was an excellent treasury chest for the safe keeping of very valuable articles.

"And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." (Ex. xxv. 8.) Sanctuary is mentioned by several writers in the Bible, but none of them, so far as I recollect, give any definition as to what they mean by sanctuary. In the New Testament it is mentioned and described thus: "For there was a tabernacle made; the first whereof was the candlestick, and the table, and the shew bread, which is called the sanctuary."* (Heb. ix. 2.) It appears to me that the sanctuary mentioned by Moses is the same as the ark and the mercy seat built by him; the mercy seat being upon the ark, and overspread by two cherubs, one on each end. "And make one cherub on one end, and the other cherub on the other end; even of the mercy seat make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the

* "*Sanctuary* — A sacred place; particularly among the Israelites the most retired part of the temple of Jerusalem, called the Holy of Holies, in which was kept the ark of the covenant, and into which no person was permitted to enter except the high priests, and that only once a year, to intercede for the people. The same name was given to the sacred part of the tabernacle."—*Noah Webster.*

testimony, of all things which I will give thee in command unto the children of Israel." (Ex. xxv. 19–22.)

That ark was a box made of shittim wood, about four feet four inches long, about two feet seven inches wide, and two feet seven inches high. What a place for the God that created the universe, if there be such a being, to dwell in! It was, so says Moses, overlaid, inside and outside, with pure gold; and upon it the mercy seat, about three feet six inches long, and one foot nine inches wide, made of pure gold; and upon each end of the mercy seat was a cherubim of pure gold, covering the whole seat with their wings. Let any rational being seriously contemplate this description! There sits, on a seat of gold, the declared Maker of all things, with a golden image on each side, with their wings stretched up over his head, forming a canopy. There he sits communing with Moses, a being he had made, commanding him to rob and to murder other beings which he had also made, men, women, and children. There you have Moses's God! O human nature! where ye are not, by tyrants and clergy, sunk to the level of the brute, can ye worship such a God?

This fine box was no doubt the depository for such articles of small bulk as the officers of government and the priests thought the most valuable, such as gold, silver, &c., and its magnificent embellishments, the mercy seat, and cherubims, said to be made of pure gold. The assertion that it was the dwelling of God, was intended to, and no doubt did, inspire the superstitious Israelites with such reverence for that little mansion as to render every thing put therein safe from their depredation. But Moses had too watchful an eye over his God, that is, gold, silver, &c., to depend for its safety on the superstition which he unremittingly fostered among his people. He made it death for

any one to come near to that highly ornamented little mansion, except the priests, who were his coadjutors in deceiving and swindling the people. Moreover, he had the staves, being the handles by which it was carried from place to place, fastened to it, and strictly forbid their being removed; so that on danger appearing, be the appearance ever so sudden, that treasure was ready for removal.

CHAPTER XII.

VISIONARY BEINGS.

In order to give some idea of the confused views which mankind have of those visionary beings called gods; angels, of nine or more orders; spirits, good and bad, &c., I will copy from four lexicographers, all of them in their day considered high authority, their explanation of "cherubim." Bailey, the most ancient of the four, says, "Cherubim, the second of the nine orders of angels. Some think that cherubim was a hieroglyphical representation of the Deity." Walker says, "Cherubim, the Hebrew plural of cherub, a celestial spirit." Johnson says, "Cherub — plural cherubim — a celestial spirit, which, in hierarchy, is placed next in order to the seraphim." Webster, who is now considered the highest authority, says, "Cherubim, the Hebrew plural of cherub. Cherub, (the word is said to signify, properly, any image or figure; if so, it may have been named from *engraving*. But this is uncertain, and the learned world is not agreed on the signification.) A figure composed of various creatures, as a man, an ox, an eagle, or a lion.

The first mention of cherubs is in Gen. iii. 24, where the figure is not described; but their office was, with a flaming sword, to keep or guard the way of the tree of life. The two cherubs which Moses was commanded to make at the ends of the mercy seat, were to be of beaten work of gold; and their wings were to extend over the mercy seat, their faces towards each other, and between them was the residence of the Deity. (Ex. xxv.) The cherubs in Ezekiel's vision had each four heads, or faces, the hands of a man, and wings. The four faces were, the face of a bull, that of a man, that of a lion, and that of an eagle. They had the likeness of a man. (Ezek. iv. and x.) In 2 Sam. xxii. 11, and Psalms xviii., Jehovah is represented as riding on a cherub, and flying on the wings of the wind. In celestial hierarchy, cherubs are represented as spirits next in order to seraphs. The hieroglyphical and emblematical figures embroidered on the vails of the tabernacle are called cherubs of skilful work. (Ex. xxvi.) A beautiful child is called a cherub."

Now, let any person take these explanations, and see if he or she can make out from them what a cherub is, or what it is like; if not, then let them examine every place where that word appears in the Bible, and account to their own understanding according to the evidence received, as to what kind of a being a cherub is; or whether there ever was such a being only in the crafty minds of hypocrites, and in the bewildered imagination of superstition. Mr. Webster ends his long and labored explanation, and no doubt as correct a one as can be given, by saying, "A beautiful child is called a cherub." I think a beautiful child very much slandered whenever it is so called; for, from all the descriptions of cherub I have met with, I do not know that there is any being that has any pretension to the human form, less like a beautiful child.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ISRAELITES.—MASSACRE OF THE BENJAMITES.

JOSHUA, after he had "smote" the thirty-one kings, divided the land among the several tribes of the Israelites; but they never did get full possession of it, as any person may satisfy himself or herself by carefully examining their progress after Joshua's death. Not more than a year after Joshua's death, Judah, who was appointed in his place, went against the Canaanites. "And the Lord was with Judah, and he drave out the inhabitants of the mountain, but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron." (Judges i. 19.) That is a positive declaration that Moses's God was not all-powerful; he could not prevail against chariots of iron. There are other places in the history of that God, where the same declaration is made in substance. I will give one: "And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him (Moses) and sought to kill him." (Ex. iv. 24.) (*Query* — What was their trouble in the tavern, that caused them to wrangle?) If any being seeks to do a thing, and does not do it, the fair and reasonable conclusion is, that he could not do it; that some superior wisdom, craft, or power prevented him from doing that which he intended to do. "And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day." (Judges i. 21.)

Nor did the Israelites find a land that "flowed with milk

and honey;" for they obtained a large part of their subsistence by murdering and plundering their neighbors. There are parts of the history of the Israelites given in the last three chapters of Judges, which appear to have been omitted in their proper place; which, according to the marginal dates, must have taken place, if they did take place at all, not more than eighteen or twenty years after the death of Joshua; and are so extraordinary in their nature and consequences, that it is surprising that they were omitted by the historian, or historians, that recorded the proceedings and exploits of Joshua; for it is clear, from many expressions in that record, that the history of Joshua was not written until many years after his death.

"And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the work of the Lord that he had done for Israel." (Joshua xxiv. 31.) Now, it could not be known whether Israel so served or not, until all the elders mentioned were dead. The writer, or writers, of the book of Judges had brought up the history of the Israelites to a period nearly or quite three hundred years after the death of Joshua, before they stated the extraordinary occurrences which I am about to review, and which, as before stated, must have happened, if at all, not more than eighteen or twenty years after his death. Judah, the immediate successor of Joshua, was the first chief sent against the Benjamites. A detailed account of these most horrible transactions may be read in Judges xix., xx., and xxi. The story plainly told is, that a lewd man took to his embraces a lewd woman, who in a short time became tired of him and left him; the record says, she played the whore. When she had been gone four months, he went in search of her, found her, and was taking her home; night coming on, he put up at a house in a town belonging to the Benjamites, one of the tribes of

Israel. After night a mob beset the house and demanded the sojourner; he, to screen himself, delivered up his concubine to the mob, and went quietly to his rest. In the morning, when he came out of the house to proceed on his way home, he found his concubine dead at the door; he laid her body upon his beast, and took it home; then cut her body into twelve parts, and sent one part to each of the twelve tribes of Israel. Of course he must have sent one part to the Benjamites, the declared offenders; and the record says, "Then all the children of Israel went out, and all the congregation was gathered together as one man, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, with the land of Gilead, unto the Lord in Mizpeh." (Judges xx. 1.) But there appears, by several declarations made in the same record, to be some mistake here; for it is said, the tribes of Israel (meaning, I suppose, all Israel except the Benjamites) sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, and demanded that they, the Benjamites, should deliver up the offenders to them, that they might put them to death; but the Benjamites, not knowing who the offenders were, or from some other cause, refused to deliver them as demanded. Upon which refusal, — so the record says, — "So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, knit together as one man." (Judges xx. 11.)

Here, again, we must suppose that "all the men of Israel" meant all but the Benjamites; and when they were drawn up in battle array before the city Gibeah, the Benjamites, whose army numbered twenty-six thousand seven hundred men, went out and met them; which rencounter and its successors resulted in the following enormous murders. In the first battle, the Benjamites slew of their brother Israelites twenty-two thousand men; in the second battle, the Benjamites slew of their brother Israelites

eighteen thousand men; in the third battle, the Israelites slew of their brother Benjamites twenty-five thousand one hundred men. There sixty-five thousand one hundred men were murdered, yet the slaughter was not half over; for the record says, that after the army of the Benjamites were slaughtered and dispersed, the Israelites turned upon the inhabitants of Benjamin, slew all, and burned their cities. As before stated, there were twenty-six thousand seven hundred Benjamites that drew the sword. It will be a moderate calculation to say, that there must have been three other inhabitants (old men and others not fit for the army, and women and children) for every soldier; then there were of these four classes murdered eighty thousand one hundred; then we must add one thousand of the soldiers not accounted for; they must have been among those who were indiscriminately murdered in the cities and in the country, for it does not appear that any of the Benjamites escaped death, except the six hundred soldiers that took refuge in the rock Rimmon. That makes the indiscriminate slaughter to be eighty-one thousand and one hundred, which, being added to the sixty-five thousand one hundred soldiers slain in the first three battles, makes the murder of one hundred and forty-six thousand two hundred men, women, and children. Yet that was not all; for after stating, as before cited, "Then all the children of Israel went out, and the congregation was gathered together as one man, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, with the land of Gilead, unto the Lord in Mizpeh," (Judges xx. 1,) it was found out, or pretended to be found out, that there was none from Jabesh-gilead up before the Lord in Mizpeh; and to punish such refusal, or neglect, there were sent against that city "twelve thousand men of the valiantest," (Judges xxi. 10,) with orders to kill all the inhabitants but the young marriageable virgins, of which they found and brought away four hundred.

As it was thought necessary to send "twelve thousand men of the valiantest," it will be a moderate calculation to say the city contained six thousand fighting men, and three other persons for every fighting man, making in all twenty-four thousand inhabitants; from which take the four hundred virgins which were kept alive, and there must have been murdered of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead twenty-three thousand six hundred men, women, and children, which, added to the already enumerated immense slaughter, will make one hundred and sixty-nine thousand and eight hundred men, women, and children butchered. And for what? Yes, indeed, for what was all that enormous butchering of men, women, and children, together with other acts equally as revolting to justice and moral rectitude, done? What of good was there accomplished by all, or any part of that wretched round of enormities? One hundred and sixty-nine thousand and eight hundred men, women, and children murdered, and four hundred young virgins forced. I ask again, for what? Yet there were two hundred of the six hundred Benjamites that escaped death, who had no wife. "Therefore they commanded the children of Benjamin (the two hundred,) saying, Go, and lie in wait in the vineyards, and see, and behold if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances; then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin." (Judges xx. 20, 21.) And they did so.

The historian, at the close of the account of the many miserable transactions there given, appears to wish to make some apology for their enormity. He says, "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes." (Judges xxi. 25.) The declaration that there was no king in Israel in those days, appears by history to be true in words, but not true in fact; that is, there

was no person there at that time that was installed king, yet every man did not do that which was right in his own eyes. If they had been left so to do, they would not have committed the enormities and wickedness they were made the tools in the hands of tyrants and hypocrites to commit; but the Israelites had a king in fact, under whose tyrannical decrees and commands, made known to them by their leaders, and enforced even by the penalty of death for disobedience or neglect, they acted from the time of their revolt in Egypt. The Bible God was that king; created by Moses to assist him in deceiving and enslaving his own people, and in murdering and robbing others; and he answered that purpose so well, that he has been kept in existence, by tyrants and clergy, to the present day.

CHAPTER XIV.

SACRIFICES, OFFERINGS, &c., AND THEIR EVIDENT OBJECT.

I HAVE said that Moses instituted his endless round of sacrifices, offerings, &c., to supply the officers of the government, and the priests, who were his tools to assist him, in deceiving and plundering the people, with a plentiful and permanent system of subsistence; and advised every person, who wished to form a correct opinion on that subject, to examine as freely and impartially as their prejudices and superstition would let them, each of those institutions as recorded by Moses in the Bible. But as those institutions are intermixed throughout a great part of Moses's writings,

there is so much trash to be gone over, there will be many who will not have the leisure, and others that may not have the disposition, to labor through such barricades of rubbish as is continually encountered in examining any thing recorded by Moses. I will therefore copy one of those institutions as recorded by him.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, My offering and my bread for my sacrifices made by fire, for a sweet savor unto me, shall ye observe to offer unto me in their due season. And thou shalt say unto them, This is the offering made by fire which ye shall offer unto the Lord: two lambs of the first year without spot day by day, for a continual burnt offering. The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer at even. And a tenth part of an ephah of flour for a meat offering, mingled with the fourth part of a hin of beaten oil. It is a continual burnt offering, which was ordained im Mount Sinai for a sweet savor, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord. And the drink offering thereof shall be the fourth part of a hin for one lamb; in the holy place shalt thou cause strong wine to be poured unto the Lord for a drink offering. And the other lamb shalt thou offer at even; as the meat offering of the morning, and as the drink offering thereof, thou shalt offer it, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord. And on the Sabbath day, two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth-deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof. This is the burnt offering of every Sabbath, besides the continual burnt offering and his drink offering.

"And in the beginning of your months ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the Lord; two young bullocks, and one ram, seven lambs of the first year without spot; and three

tenth-deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, for one bullock; and two tenth-deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, for one ram; and a several tenth-deal of flour, mingled with oil, for a meat offering unto one lamb, for a burnt offering of a sweet savor, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord. And their drink offerings shall be half a hin of wine unto a bullock, and the third part of a hin unto a ram, and the fourth part of a hin unto one lamb: this is the burnt offering of every month throughout the months of the year. And one kid of the goats for a sin offering unto the Lord shall be offered, besides the continual burnt offering and his drink offering. And on the fourteenth of the first month is the passover of the Lord. And on the fifteenth of this month is the feast; seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. In the first day there shall be a holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of servile work therein. But ye shall offer a sacrifice made by fire for a burnt offering unto the Lord; two young bullocks, and one ram, and seven lambs of the first year; they shall be unto you without blemish. And their meat offering shall be of flour, mingled with oil; three tenth-deals shall ye offer for a bullock, and two tenth-deals for a ram; a several tenth-deal for a lamb, throughout the seven lambs; and one goat for a sin offering, to make an atonement for you. Ye shall offer these besides the burnt offering in the morning, which is for a continual burnt offering. After this manner ye shall offer daily throughout the seven days, the meat of the sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord; it shall be an offering besides the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering. And on the seventh day ye shall have a holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work. Also, in the days of the first fruits, when ye bring a new meat offering unto the Lord, after your weeks be out, ye shall have a

holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work. But ye shall offer the burnt offering for a sweet savor unto the Lord; two young bullocks, one ram, seven lambs of the first year; and their meat offering of flour, mingled with oil, three tenth-deals unto one bullock, two tenth-deals unto one ram, a several tenth-deal unto one lamb, throughout the seven lambs; and one kid of the goats to make an atonement for you. Ye shall offer them besides the continual burnt offering and his meat offering, (they shall be unto you without blemish,) and their drink offering.

"And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have a holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work; it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you. And ye shall offer a burnt offering for a sweet savor unto the Lord; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year without blemish. And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth-deals for a bullock, and two tenth-deals for a ram; and one tenth-deal for a lamb throughout the seven lambs; and one kid of the goats for a sin offering, to make an atonement for you: besides the burnt offering of the month, and his meat offering, and the daily burnt offering, and his meat offering, and their drink offerings, according unto the manner, for a sweet savor, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord. And ye shall have on the tenth day of the seventh month a holy convocation: and ye shall afflict your souls: ye shall not do any work therein: but ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the Lord for a sweet savor; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year; they shall be unto you without blemish. And their meat offering shall be of flour, mingled with oil, three tenth-deals to a bullock, and two tenth-deals to one ram; a several tenth-deal for one lamb throughout the seven lambs; one kid of the goats for a sin

offering; besides the sin offering of atonement, and the continual burnt offering, and the meat offering of it, and the drink offerings.

"And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month ye shall have a holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work, and ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days: and ye shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord; thirteen young bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year; they shall be without blemish. And their meat offerings shall be of flour mingled with oil; three tenth-deals unto every bullock of the thirteen bullocks, two tenth-deals to each ram of the two rams, and a several tenth-deal to each lamb of the fourteen lambs; and one kid of the goats for a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering. And on the second day ye shall offer twelve young bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without spot. And their meat offerings and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs shall be according to their number, after the manner; and one kid of the goats for a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, and the meat offering thereof, and their drink offerings. And on the third day, eleven bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish. And their meat offerings and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs shall be according to their number, after the manner; and one goat for a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, and his drink offering. And on the fourth day, ten bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish. Their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner; and one kid of the

goats for a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering.

"And on the fifth day nine bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without spot; and their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs shall be according to their number, after the manner; and a goat for a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, and his drink offering. And on the sixth day eight bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish; and their meat offering and their drink offering for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs shall be according to their number, after the manner; and one goat for a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering. And on the seventh day seven bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish; and their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs shall be according to their number, after the manner; and one goat for a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering. On the eighth day ye shall have a solemn assembly: ye shall do no servile work therein; but ye shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord: one bullock, one ram, seven lambs of the first year without blemish; their meat offering and their drink offering for the bullock, for the ram, and for the lambs shall be according to their number, after the manner; and one goat for a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, and his drink offering. These things ye shall do unto the Lord in your set feasts, besides your vows, and your free will offerings, for your burnt offerings, and your meat offerings, and for your drink offerings, and for

your peace offerings. And Moses told the children of Israel according to all that the Lord commanded Moses." (Num. xxviii. 1–39 ; xxix. 13–40.)

I have counted the number of animals, and calculated the quantity of flour, of oil, and of wine, which these "set feasts" required in each year, as carefully as I could. The number of animals I believe to be correct, and the quantity of flour, oil, and wine as nearly so as can be made out from the measures given ; but such as desire so to do can examine and calculate for themselves. I find as follows: One hundred and eight bullocks, thirty-two rams, nine hundred and seventy-four lambs, eighteen kids, and six goats; the quantity of flour two hundred and four bushels and three tenths of a bushel; of oil, five hundred and ten gallons and three quarts; and of wine, four hundred and sixty-eight gallons and one quart. Add to these the many gifts, offerings, and sacrifices mentioned in the Bible history of those times, and you have an array of tyrannical and hypocritical impositions never equally practised upon any other people. Some of those which I mentioned when speaking of the organization of Moses's guard I will state here, that they may be in company with this display of gross impositions. "And the Lord spake unto Aaron, Behold, I also have given thee charge of my heave offerings of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel; unto thee have I given them by reason of the anointing, and to thy sons, by an ordinance forever. This shall be thine of the most holy things reserved from the fire: every oblation of theirs, every meat offering of theirs, and every sin offering of theirs, and every trespass offering of theirs which they shall render unto me shall be most holy for thee and for thy sons. In the most holy place shalt thou eat it: every male shall eat it: it shall be holy unto thee. And this is thine; the heave offering

of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel: I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons, and to thy daughters with thee, by statute forever: every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it. All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the first fruits of them which they shall offer unto the Lord, them have I given unto thee; and whatsoever is first ripe in the land, which they shall bring unto the Lord, shall be thine: every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it. Every thing devoted in Israel shall be thine." (Num. xviii. 8–13.)

Notwithstanding the many sacrifices, vows, gifts, offerings, &c., which were secured to the priests, the Levites, the tribe from which all the priests were and were to be forever taken, had set apart to them the tenth of all that belonged to the other tribes.

"And the Lord spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel. And behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin, and die. But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance. But the tithes of the children of Israel which they offer as a heave offering unto the Lord I have given to the Levites to inherit; therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance." (Num. xviii. 20–24.)

CHAPTER XV.

THE INORDINATE AMBITION AND AVARICE OF THE CLERGY.—CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

Every honest person naturally would conclude that on receiving the indisputable (it was death to question any of the commands of Moses's God) title to the benefit of so many vows, gifts, offerings, sacrifices, &c., and added thereto the tenth of every thing in Israel, the priestly tribe, the Levites, would certainly be satisfied — that they would not require or receive of their poor oppressed countrymen any thing more. Those who would thus conclude have little reflected on the desire for power and pelf which ever did, and now does, govern the majority of the clergy of every country. No; the Levites were not done with their exactions; for notwithstanding their God had told them they should not have any inheritance among the children of Israel, they did, by some management or other, obtain a decree from that same God for forty-eight cities with very large suburbs, to be selected in the possessions of the other eleven tribes, according to the possession of each tribe.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab, by Jordan, near Jericho, saying, Command the children of Israel that they give unto the Levites of the inheritance of their possession cities to dwell in; and ye shall give also unto the Levites suburbs for the cities round about them. And the cities shall they have to dwell in; and the suburbs of them shall be for their cattle, and for their goods, and

for all kind of beasts. And the suburbs of the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites shall reach from the wall of the city and outward a thousand cubits round about. And ye shall measure from without the city on the east side two thousand cubits, and the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits; and the city shall be in the midst: this shall be to them the suburbs of the city. And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites there shall be six cities for refuge, which ye shall appoint for the man slayer, that he may flee thither; and to them ye shall add forty and two cities. So all the cities which ye shall give to the Levites shall be forty and eight cities: them shall ye give with their suburbs. And the cities which ye shall give shall be of the possession of the children of Israel: from them that have many ye shall give many; but from them that have few ye shall give few; every one shall give of his cities unto the Levites according to his inheritance which he inheriteth." (Num. xxxv. 1–8.)

Noah Webster, in his Dictionary, says that Dr. Arbuthnot states the cubit of the Scriptures at a little less than twenty-two inches; in my calculations I shall rate the cubit at twenty-one inches. "Ye shall measure from without the city on the east side two thousand cubits, and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits." That measurement was to commence at the outer edge of the cities. If we suppose that from the centre of each city, on an average, to the outer edge was five hundred cubits, (which would be supposing the cities small in proportion to their suburbs,) then each city, with its suburbs, on an average, would extend from its centre east two thousand five hundred cubits, south two thousand five hundred cubits,

west two thousand five hundred cubits, north two thousand five hundred cubits. Each city, with its suburbs, then occupied a piece of ground five thousand cubits square. If there be no mistake in my calculation, (I think there is not,) the forty-eight cities, with their suburbs, which were thus decreed to the Levites for an inheritance by that same God who had declared repeatedly that they should have no inheritance in the land, covered one hundred and thirty-one square miles and eight tenths of a square mile of land — a quantity equal to one third of Miami county. This grant demonstrates how difficult it always has been to guard against the wiles of the clergy. Are they any better at the present day, where they have power to enforce their exactions? I think not. The following extract will show they have made no improvement, except in the way of amassing to themselves enormously large amounts of wealth out of the hard earnings of the poor, leaving thousands of the poor to starve, while they revel, amidst their ill-gotten wealth, in luxury, pride, and insolence: —

From the "Daily Ohio Statesman" of September 25, 1851.

"OPPRESSION OF IRELAND.

"From a late parliamentary return of the revenue of the bishops of the Established Church in Ireland we find that the twenty-five state bishops of England divide among them, annually, the sum of one hundred and eighty thousand pounds sterling! ($799,200.) The sums they have left behind them at their death are enormous. The returns made to the English Parliament prove that eleven Irish state bishops left behind them amassed wealth to the amount of one million eight hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds sterling, accumulated in a period of from forty to

fifty years: the Bishop of Dublin, £150,000; the Bishop of Tuam, £250,000; the Bishop of Raphoe, £250,000; the Bishop of Armagh, £300,000; the Bishop of Clogher, £250,000; the Bishop of Cashell, £400,000; with a list of others, making the amount above named. Now, when the fact is considered that these large amounts of money are collected by the aforesaid bishops from the poorest nation on the face of the earth, and from a people to whom the mass of them render not the smallest service, the oppressiveness of this church hierarchy can be justly estimated. Perhaps in all Ireland there are not more than some 700,000 Protestants; and in a large number of parishes not one, and yet the people are all compelled to pay tithes for the support of this Established Church. We confess that we look upon these exactions with feelings of loathing, and we wonder not that Protestantism is repudiated by the oppressed people of Ireland. There is rank oppression and gross injustice in a system which robs the common people to pamper the pride and luxury of Episcopal favorites."

Such injustice and oppression are the legitimate offspring of the tyrannical conduct of Moses, Joshua, Judah, David, and Solomon, and the hypocritical and legerdemain tricks of their respective priests. How can it be otherwise, so long as the history of those tyrants and hypocrites is made a very prominent feature in the education of the infant, of the youth, and of the aged? the very reading of which, it being little else than the continued relation of the most abominable crimes, and which crimes the history states were committed, in general, by the command of God, (Moses's God,) is sufficient to, and does, corrupt the minds of children, and of youth, and often extinguishes the best feelings of human nature in the aged. The frequent exhibiting or relating of

crimes, even when they are accompanied with the denunciations and the penalties of the law against those who commit them, it is well known, has a very injurious effect on the morals of society. Then, how infinitely more injurious must be the continually reading of and pondering over horrid crimes committed by men who, we are taught to believe, were the best, and some of them the wisest, men that ever lived; and that their acts were, generally, nothing more than the fulfilment of the commands of God!

The low estimation in which women and children were held by the Hebrews, from Abraham to Solomon inclusive, is sufficient proof that their morals were of the most degrading type. It does not appear that their principal men considered women of any consequence other than to be used by the men; and it does appear that they cared not to raise more females than they considered desirable to gratify the passions of the men, nor more males than were necessary to keep up a force that would enable them to continue their murderings and plunderings of their neighbors. The conduct of the principal men of the Hebrews, from Abraham to Judah, who succeeded Joshua, has been sufficiently portrayed in the preceding sketches. I will now exhibit a few of the doings of David, and of Solomon, his son, as they are, I believe, generally considered the two greatest men of that nation except Moses.

CHAPTER XVI.

DAVID.—HIS ABOMINABLE PRAYER.

David had born to him in Hebron six sons, only one of whom was the offspring of his wife; and he had born to him in Jerusalem thirteen sons and a daughter, of concubines. (1 Chron. iii.) Of the thirteen it is not stated who their mothers were, except four — Shimea, Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon. They were the sons of Bathshua, who, I suppose, was his particular favorite; for he swore to her that her son Solomon should inherit his throne, which oath he in his extreme old age and debility complied with, by having Solomon anointed king of Israel, and seated on his own throne, and general proclamation made thereof. At a certain time David saw a woman washing herself, and being very much pleased with her appearance, sent some of his servants — "kings can do no wrong" — and had her brought to him; and he lay with her, and then let her return to her own house. (2 Sam. xi. 4.) That woman was Bath-sheba, the daughter of Eliam, and the wife of Uriah the Hittite. David was so well pleased with Bath-sheba that he determined to have her to himself; he therefore sent Uriah to the war, and gave orders to the commanding officer to have him placed in the front of the battle, so that he should be certainly killed, which was done accordingly. After Uriah's death, David took Bath-sheba to wife, and Samuel says that she was the mother of Solomon (2 Sam. xii. 24; but Samuel does not agree with the account given in Chronicles. It is there stated that Bathshua, the daughter

of Ammiel, was the mother of Solomon; and according to the arrangement there given, he was her youngest son of four. (1 Chron. iii. 5.)

The hundred and ninth Psalm of David is a long prayer to his God to send heavy and continued curses upon his adversaries, and great and perpetual blessings upon himself: "Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise; for the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful is open against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue. They compassed me about also with words of hatred, and fought against me without cause. For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer. And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love. Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand. When he shall be judged let him be condemned; and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few, and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg: let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places. Let the extortioner catch all that he hath, and the stranger spoil his labor. Let there be none to extend mercy unto him; neither let there be any to favor his fatherless children. Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out. Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the Lord, and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out. Let them be before the Lord continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth. Because that he remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might slay the broken in heart. As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him. As he clothed himself with cursing like as with a garment, so let it come into

his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones. Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually. Let this be the reward of mine adversaries from the Lord, and of them that speak evil against my soul. But do thou for me, O God the Lord, for thy name's sake: because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me. For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me. I am gone like the shadow when it declineth: I am tossed up and down like the locust. My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness. I became also a reproach unto them: when they looked upon me they shaked their heads. Help me, O Lord my God: O, save me according to thy mercy; that they may know that this is thy hand; that thou, Lord, hast done it. Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise let them be ashamed, but thy servant rejoice. Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion as with a mantle. I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude. For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul." (Ps. cix.)

After reading the foregoing prayer, who can doubt that "David was a man after God's own heart"? But it was the Bible God, who was created, or at least fashioned, by Moses. Can any rational being believe that such wicked, such abominably wicked trash can be acceptable to an infinitely wise, infinitely powerful, and, of course, infinitely good being, if there be such a being?

"Now King David was old and stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat. Wherefore his servants said unto him, Let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin: and let her stand before the

king, and let her cherish him, and let her lie in thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat. So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag, a Shunammite, and brought her to the king. And the damsel was very fair, and cherished the king, and ministered to him." (1 Kings i. 1.) David and his God appear each to have had a heart as base and depraved as it is possible for any being to have; but there appears one honorable exception in David's favor. "And David said unto God, I am in a great strait; let us fall now into the hand of the Lord, for his mercies are great, and let me not fall into the hand of man. So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed; and there died of the people from Dan even to Beer-sheba seventy thousand men. And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented him of the evil, and said unto the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thy hand. And David spake unto the Lord when he saw the angel that smote the people, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? Let thy hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house." (2 Sam. xxiv. 14.)

The record does not inform us how many women and children died, for they were considered, among the Israelites, of too little consequence to merit the trouble of counting; yet they uniformly suffered with the men, whether the suffering was inflicted by the Bible God or by his vicegerents; so that we may reasonably conclude that for every man that died there were two other persons died. If so, then there were two hundred and ten thousand men, women, and children murdered by that vindictive God. For what? Why, because David, as king, made his officers number his

subjects; and yet that God had moved David to do so. The benevolent person, after reading the above statement and exercising his reason thereon, has this consolation: he is convinced that no such abominable transaction ever was committed; that Moses and Jethro's God could not accomplish such labor either for evil or for good; and that a wise and good God would make no attempt to commit such abominable wickedness. It is much more rational to conclude, that historians, if they are even called "divinely inspired," lie, than that any such unreasonable acts ever occurred.

CHAPTER XVII.

SOLOMON.—REHOBOAM.

As soon as Solomon obtained power, he showed himself to be a ferocious, unprincipled tyrant. "And Adonijah, the son of Haggith, came to Bath-sheba, the mother of Solomon. And she said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably. And he said, moreover, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And she said, Say on. And he said, Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine, and that all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign: howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's: for it was his from the Lord. And now I ask one petition of thee; deny me not. And she said unto him, Say on. And he said, Speak, I pray thee, unto Solomon the king, (for he will not say thee nay,) that he give me Abishag, the Shunammite, to wife. And Bath-sheba said, Well, I will speak for thee unto the king. Bath-sheba therefore went unto

King Solomon, to speak unto him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; and she sat on his right hand. Then she said, I desire one small petition of thee; I pray thee say me not nay. And the king said unto her, Ask on, my mother, for I will not say thee nay. And she said, Let Abishag, the Shunammite, be given to Adonijah, thy brother, to wife. And King Solomon answered and said unto his mother, And why dost thou ask Abishag, the Shunammite, for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also; for he is my elder brother. Then King Solomon sware by the Lord, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah hath not spoken this word against his own life. Now, therefore, as the Lord liveth, which hath established me, and set me on the throne of David, my father, and who hath made me a house, as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death this day. And King Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada; and he fell upon him, that he died." (1 Kings i. 1; ii. 13–25.)

When Joab was told that Adonijah was murdered, he "fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord, and caught hold on the horns of the altar;" but Solomon sent Benaiah, who appears to have been his principal assassin, and had Joab murdered in that situation, notwithstanding the pretended sacredness of the place. Solomon commanded Shimei to build himself a house in Jerusalem, and there to live, and not to go any where; that if he ever crossed the brook Kedron he should be put to death. Three years after that command was given, two of Shimei's servants ran away, and he, being informed that they were in a certain place, went for them and brought them home; whereupon some of the king's informers gave him information of Shimei's

having been out of the city. "So the king commanded Benaiah; which went out and fell upon him, that he died."

The judgment which Solomon gave between two contending harlots is said to have given him great renown for wisdom throughout his whole kingdom; yet it was not a matter that required great wisdom. It required some knowledge of human nature to ascertain the truth between them. But his actions generally testify that he knew but little of human nature, except its depravity; not knowing or caring to know that that depravity had been induced by the tyranny of rulers, supported and assisted by the hypocrisy and false teachings of priests among the many. "The queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord: she came to prove him with hard questions." (1 Kings x. 1.) And it is said that he answered her questions to her satisfaction; but as these questions and answers are not stated, we have no means of knowing whether they were wise or foolish; but we do know that, generally, there are more hard foolish questions asked than hard wise ones; and wise questions are sometimes answered very foolishly. But that which the queen appeared most to admire, and which seemed to affect her most, was the magnificent style in which the king lived. "And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord, there was no more spirit in her." (1 Kings x. 4, 5.) And certainly, if pomp and show, supported by tyranny and injustice, is proof of wisdom, Solomon was very wise; for "Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains."

"Besides the chiefs of Solomon's officers which were over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work. And all King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of Lebanon were of pure gold; none were of silver; it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon. For the king had at sea a navy of Tarshish, with the navy of Hiram. Once in three years came the navy of Tarshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks. And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycamore trees that are in the vale, for abundance. (1 Kings v. 15, 16; x. 21, 22, 27.) And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen; and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, which he placed in the chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem. And Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots." (1 Chron. i. 4; ix. 25.)

But there is a much larger account of that article, stall, given in Kings. It is there said, —

"And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots. And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal, ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and a hundred sheep, besides harts, and roebucks, and fallow deer, and fatted fowl." (1 Kings iv. 22, 23, 26.)

How many others besides the queen of Sheba, from her time to the present, there have been that have discovered great wisdom in Solomon's tyranny and oppression I know not; but certain it is that generally all rulers of the people in every country have endeavored to follow his example, so far as they could swindle and force means from the people that would enable them to do so; and they have been

almost universally successful in carrying out their nefarious schemes against the people, and have always been upheld and assisted by the clergy. Notwithstanding that Solomon equalled, perhaps, any other individual that ever lived in swindling and tyrannizing over the people, he appears not to have been satisfied with that notoriety, but seems to have been ambitious to let the world know that he could exceed all others in lewdness and debauchery. "But King Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughters of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines. (1 Kings xi. 1.)

Solomon's son, Rehoboam, after he ascended his father's throne, showed himself to be worthy of such a father.

"And Rehoboam took him Mahalath, the daughter of Jerimoth, the son of David, to wife; Abihail, the daughter of Eliab, the son of Jesse, which bare him children, Jeush, and Shamariah, and Zaham. And after her he took Maachah, the daughter of Absalom, which bare him Abijah, and Attai, and Ziza, and Shelomith. And Rehoboam loved Maachah, the daughter of Absalom, above all his wives and his concubines; for he took eighteen wives and threescore concubines, and begat twenty and eight sons and threescore daughters." (2 Chron. xi. 18–21.)

Respecting the Proverbs and Songs of Solomon, it is said, "And he spake three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five." (1 Kings iv. 32.) There are not so many published, but we may reasonably suppose that those published were considered the best. There are of the Proverbs, I suppose, (for I have not counted them,) about one thousand published. There are thirty-one chapters, and, from a general view, I think they will average

something over thirty to a chapter; and if these thousand are the best selected out of three thousand, the other two thousand must have been poor affairs indeed. To show their general character, and the situation they are entitled to in the graduation of morals, I will copy about half of one chapter.

"There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not — the way of an eagle in the air, the way of a serpent upon a rock, the way of a ship in the midst of the sea, and the way of a man with a maid." (Judging from his intimacy with so many women, three hundred wives and seven hundred concubines, I would have expected that he was well acquainted with "the way of a man with a maid.") "For three things the earth is disquieted, and four which it cannot bear: For a servant when he reigneth, and a fool when he is filled with meat; for an odious woman when she is married, and a handmaid that is heir to her mistress. There are four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise: The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer; the conies are but a feeble folk, yet they make their houses in the rocks; the locusts have no king, yet they go forth all of them by bands; the spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces. There be three things that go well, yea, four are comely in going: a lion, which is the strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any; a greyhound, a he goat, and a king against whom there is no rising up." (Prov. xxx. 18–31.)

Of the thousand Songs of Solomon, spoken of in Kings, there appear to be but eight published, and, as in the case of the Proverbs, we may reasonably suppose that these are of the best — that is, they were considered such as could be rendered most subservient to the interest of the clergy,

who, for hundreds of years, published almost every thing that was published; and recollect, that the extent of publication of all the things contained in the book called the "Holy Bible" was determined on after the establishment of the Christian religion, and at a time when the priesthood had almost universal sway where the publication took place. It appears to me almost impossible that there can be a more shameless imposition than the headings of these songs, which headings are evidently the conjurations of the clergy. Let any person of common sense read the headings, and then read the songs, and see if he can find any likeness or connection between them. This want of connection is easily understood when it is recollected that the songs were written a thousand years before the headings were conjured out for them; and the conduct and writings of the author of these songs show that he had no idea that there ever would be such things take place as those referred to in these headings. I will here copy one of these songs, with its heading, and first give the heading: "Christ setteth forth the graces of the church. He showeth his love to her. The church prayeth to be made fit for his presence." Second, the song:

"Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks; thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from Mount Gilead. Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which come up from the washing, whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them. Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely. Thy temples are like a piece of pomegranate within thy locks. Thy neck is like the tower of David builded for an armory, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men. Thy

two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies. Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and the hill of frankincense. Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee. Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon; look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards. Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse, thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices! Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon. A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard; spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon. Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruits." (Solomon's Songs iv. 1–16.)

These songs are strictly congenial with the character, as exhibited by his actions, of Solomon, containing many voluptuous allusions, and were no doubt love ditties written by him to favorite women. Some of them carry the appearance of having been written by some of his women to him; but in booking them they have been credited to him. It is an insult to common sense to hold out any idea that a

man who had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines employed himself in writing songs to eulogize persons and institutions that came into existence a thousand years after he was dead.

CHAPTER XVIII.

JESUS CHRIST.—HIS APOSTLES.—DIFFERENT OPINIONS CONCERNING HIM.

If we had any tolerably correct history of the sayings and doings of Jesus Christ, I doubt not but that his character would appear that of a talented, honest, virtuous man. There was nothing of his life written till at least thirty years after his death, even if those writings were the work of those persons whose names they bear, which is very questionable, as I think I shall make appear. Recollect, also, that those histories, or pretended histories, only existed in separate manuscripts some hundreds of years, and were copied and recopied all the time under the poisonous control of tyrants and clergy, before they were compiled in a book. As to Jesus's pretending to a divine mission, he was excusable if he did; for Moses and his successors had, by their impositions, rendered the mass of the people so superstitious that the most talented and best of men could have had no influence or done any good unless they were supposed to have a mission from Heaven. Some say that he could not write, but that I doubt; for he appears to have been well acquainted with the laws, ceremonies, and abuses

of the Jews, and his main object was to curtail the power of the clergy, and to reform the abuses committed by them; for the principal officer of the government, Pilate, could find no charge of guilt against him. We may therefore conclude that he did not attempt to extend his reformation to any important principle of the government, but mainly to curtail the power, influence, and abuses of the clergy, which brought upon him the vindictive and tyrannical displeasure of that order, and it was through their influence over the people that he was put to death.

"Therefore, when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you, Barabbas, or Jesus, which is called Christ? (For he knew that for envy they delivered him.) But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see you to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children." (Matt. xxvii. 17–25.)

It also appears that his family must have been educated, for his brother Simon was made Bishop of Jerusalem in the year 62, and was crucified under Trajan in the year 107. Nor is it probable that those he selected as his apostles, or assistants, were of the lowest order of society; for Matthew (who, according to the arrangement of the present "New

Testament," has written either the first or best history of Jesus Christ that has been written) was a tax gatherer, and was "sitting at the receipt of custom" when Jesus called him; and Peter and Andrew, James and John, being fishermen is no proof of their being of low grade in society. James and John were in a ship with their father Zebedee, mending their nets; so we may reasonably conclude that the father and sons were the owners of the ship and the fishing apparatus which they used, and that all those fishermen were owners of the fisheries at which they were fishing. The governor appears to have had no charge against Jesus, but considered him a "just person;" and no doubt he intended to have used his faculties in endeavoring to reform the impositions and abuses saddled upon his countrymen chiefly by hypocrisy and false teachings; and it is likely he would have accomplished much good had it not been for the vindictive persecution of the clergy, which caused him and most of his assistants to be put to death.

James, the son of Zebedee, was put to death in the year 44; James, the brother of Simon, was put to death in the year 62; Jude, the brother of James and Simon, was put to death in the year 80; Matthew, it is supposed, was put to death, but I have never seen any statement as to the time. It must have been after the year 64, for, according to Dr. Lardner, Matthew wrote his Gospel in that year. Paul was put to death in the year 66; Peter was crucified in the year 66; Simon the apostle, surnamed Zelotes, was put to death, the time given.

The almost innumerable different opinions among mankind, and even among those calling themselves Christians, concerning Jesus Christ, is strong evidence against his being a God; for if a God he certainly could, and if a just and good being he certainly would, give to all mankind such

clear and unmistakable evidence of who and what he is, and how he wishes us to conduct ourselves towards him, that none could ignorantly err. Perhaps the clergy will say that he has done so; if they do, they will say that which they know not to be so; for they do know that there are thousands of honest, upright, good persons that differ, and widely too, on that subject. You do not understand the evidence, say these learned gentlemen; we will explain it to you. Then it is not unmistakably plain. But, gentlemen, you differ among yourselves, and essentially too; but, notwithstanding you are not agreed among yourselves, if we will submit our necks to your yoke, and pay you well, you will no doubt condescend to tell us something, and each of you will tell differently; and if we submit your teachings to the test of reason, experience, and common sense, we will likely discover that we have received no true knowledge.

I can speak for myself. I attended clerical preachings more than sixty years, as honestly desiring to know the truth as any of them; and I cannot discover that I have ever received any true knowledge through clerical teachings. It is estimated that there are eight hundred millions of human beings on the earth: one hundred and seventy-five and a half millions of Christians; two and a half millions of Jews; one hundred and forty millions Mahometans; and four hundred and eighty-two millions Pagans; so that less than one fourth of the whole number are claimed as having any pretensions to Christianity; and of these there are some millions, no wise inferior to the others either in wisdom, virtue, or benevolence, who reject the divinity of Jesus Christ. Thomas Robbins, who was, when he wrote largely, "minister of the gospel in East Windsor, Connecticut," said, "Trinitarians include all that portion of

Christians who believe in the Trinity of the Godhead. They believe that the Deity exists three persons in one God. I know of no better definition of this doctrine than that with which we are so familiar — "There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory."

In the absence of the presiding judge, the three associate judges, John, James, and Jacob, formed the court, or, if you please, the court-head — "the same in substance, equal in power and glory." By what arithmetic do you make these three one? The same Mr. Robbins said, "The Socinians assert that Christ was simply a man, and consequently had no existence before his appearance in the world. The Arians maintain that Christ was a superangelic being, united to a human body; that himself created, he was the creator of all other things under God, and the instrument of all the divine communications to the patriarchs."

Theophilus Lindsey, born 1723, took his degrees in arts at Cambridge, and obtained, after other preferments, the valuable living of Catterick, in Yorkshire; which, however, he resigned in 1773, having embraced the Socinian system; he died in 1808, aged 85 years. Of Jesus Christ he said, "I cannot make him the supreme God, nor invoke or pray to him as such; because I am persuaded that if he could hear, and make himself known to me, he would call out from heaven, as he did formerly to Paul, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth; one who was once a mortal man like yourself: worship God.'" The Unitarians say, that "there is no such thing as a Trinitarian Christian mentioned, or supposed, in the New Testament; all therein named being perfect Unitarians — Jesus himself, his apostles, and all his followers."

Besides the many different opinions concerning Jesus among those calling themselves Christians, there are thousands in every civilized nation that acknowledge the existence of one God, but reject all ideas of a plurality of persons to constitute that God. Neither do they believe that God has ever made any written revelation to mankind; they offer him no outward ceremonial worship; they do not believe that an infinitely wise and infinitely good being can be influenced by entreaties and prayers; that they show, in those who address them, a want of confidence in the wisdom or the goodness of the being to whom they are addressed. These people of course employ no clergy; therefore the whole order, the high, the low, the wise, the ignorant, all agree in traducing and continually sending forth anathemas against Deists. Nearly all the most talented and learned of the Chinese are in reality Deists. They receive the precepts of Confucius, not as from a divine being, but as from a very wise, just, and virtuous man. The idol worship kept up there, is to make easy the governing of the ignorant, who are in every country, from long habit, easier governed by ridiculous forms and ceremonies than they are by truth and reason. The clergy in China are said to be generally of low extraction, except the high priest, who always keeps near the body of the emperor. They are required not to marry so long as they remain in office, but they can resign their office at any time they please. The high priest is allowed to marry, because the office is inherent in the same family; and it is said to have descended unbroken in the family of the present high priest more than a thousand years.

About three years ago we had accounts from China which stated that an edict had been issued by the prefect of one of the provinces against Christianity, as illegal, incredible,

and absurd. If the object of the leaders and directors of the revolution now going on in China is really to free the people, they will govern, so far as the state of the people will justify, by the wise, just, and virtuous precepts of Confucius; but if they only intend to destroy the present despotism, to build upon its ruins a new one, then it is likely they will embrace the Christian religion, which in its present state, throughout the world, is better calculated to support tyranny than any system of religion that has ever been devised.

About forty-five years ago I went to the Methodist meeting house on Fell's Point, city of Baltimore. Mr. Nicholas Snethen (I am not certain that I have his surname quite right, but think I have) preached. He was a good speaker, a talented man, and, I believe, well educated; and, I presume, stood high with his sect, for he frequently travelled with their bishop. It was Christmas day; of course the purport of his sermon was to exhibit the circumstances of the birth of Jesus Christ. In the course of his sermon he observed, that the generally received opinion among Christians was, that Christ was born in a manger, which opinion, he said, was not correct; that he was born in a cave; also the opinion that he was born of very poor parents was incorrect; that his parents were wealthy. These assertions he supported by reasons and authorities which I now do not recollect. The doctrine was evidently new to most of his hearers, if not to all. Some of the rigid professors of his sect were much displeased, and expressed great astonishment that brother Snethen should introduce such new-fangled doctrines into his sermon. The doctrine was as new to me as to any of them; but from the general character of Mr. Snethen, I did not doubt but that he had, what he considered, good authority for his opinions. I had not

then read the "Apocryphal New Testament;" there I find, —

"In the three hundred and ninth year of the era of Alexander, Augustus published a decree that all persons should go to be taxed in their own country. Joseph therefore arose, and with Mary, his spouse, he went to Jerusalem, that he and his family might be taxed in the city of his fathers. And when they came to the cave, Mary confessed to Joseph that her time of bringing forth was come, and she could not go on to the city, and said, Let us go into this cave. At that time the sun was very near going down. But Joseph hastened away that he might fetch a midwife; and when he saw an old Hebrew woman, who was of Jerusalem, he said to her, Pray come hither, good woman, and go into that cave, and you will there see a woman just ready to bring forth. It was after sunset when the old woman, and Joseph with her, reached the cave; and they both went into it. And behold it was all filled with lights, greater than the lights of lamps and candles, and greater than the light of the sun itself. The infant was then wrapped up in swaddling clothes, and sucking the breast of his mother St. Mary. When they both saw this light they were surprised; the old woman asked St. Mary, Art thou the mother of this child? St. Mary replied she was: on which the old woman said, Thou art very different from all other women. St. Mary answered As there is not any child like to my son, so neither is there any woman like to his mother. The old woman answered and said, O my lady, I am come hither that I may obtain an everlasting reward. Then our lady St. Mary said to her, Lay thine hands upon the infant; which when she had done, she became whole. And as she was going forth, she said, From henceforth, all the days of my life, I will attend upon and be a servant of this infant." (Matt. i. 1–18.)

This account of the birth of Jesus Christ coincides fully with the declarations of Mr. Snethen, and shows that he considered this book high authority, if not canonical. There are other books in this New Testament in which it is stated he was born in a cave.

Respecting the wealth of his parents, it is stated, "The blessed and glorious Virgin Mary sprang from the royal race and family of David; was born in the city of Nazareth, and educated at Jerusalem, in the temple of the Lord. Her father's name was Joachim, and her mother's Anna. The family of her father was of Galilee and the city of Nazareth. The family of her mother was of Bethlehem. Their lives were plain and right in the sight of the Lord, pious and faultless before men. For they divided their substance into three parts; one of which they devoted to the temple and the officers of the temple; another they distributed among strangers and persons in poor circumstances; and the third they reserved for themselves and the uses of their own family. In this manner they lived about twenty years chastely in the favor of God and the esteem of men." (Matt. i. 1–5.)

It is also stated in the Protevangelion, or an Historical Account of the Birth of Christ, and the Perpetual Virgin Mary, his Mother; by James the Lesser, Cousin and Brother of the Lord Jesus, chief Apostle and first Bishop of the Christians in Jerusalem, —

"In the history of the twelve tribes of Israel, we read there was a certain person called Joachim, who, being very rich, made double offerings to the Lord God, having made this resolution, My substance shall be for the benefit of the whole people, and that I may find mercy from the Lord God for the forgiveness of my sins." (Prot. i. 1.)

As it appears by these gospels, or histories, that Mary

was the only child that Joachim ever had, and that he was very rich, the reasonable conclusion is, that she was rich. These books are called apocryphal, because their divinity is doubted; at the present day they are denied by almost all Christians. For myself, I consider them standing on an equal footing with those which are generally called canonical; each containing some correct views, and some truth, mixed up with a great quantity of error and falsehood.

The compiler of the Apocryphal New Testament says, "This Gospel is ascribed to James. The allusions to it in the ancient fathers are frequent, and their expressions indicate that it had obtained a very general credit in the Christian world. The controversies founded on it chiefly relate to the age of Joseph at the birth of Christ, and to his being a widower, with children, before his marriage with the Virgin Mary. Chap. vi. 1, it is said that Joseph was very far advanced in years. It seems material to remark, that the legends of the latter ages affirm the virginity of Joseph, notwithstanding Epiphanius, Hilary, Chrysostom, Cyril, Euthymius, Theophylact, Œcumerius, and indeed all the Latin fathers till Ambrose, and the Greek fathers afterwards, maintained the opinions of Joseph's age and family, founded upon belief in the authenticity of this book. It is supposed to have been originally composed in Hebrew. Postellus brought the manuscript of this Gospel from the Levant, and translated it into Latin, and sent it to Oporinus, a printer at Basil, where Bibliander, a Protestant divine, and the professor of divinity at Zurich, caused it to be printed in 1552. Postellus asserts that it was publicly read as canonical in the Eastern churches, they making no doubt that James was the author of it. It is, nevertheless, considered apocryphal by some of the most learned divines in the Protestant and Catholic churches.

By the history of the above book, and the different opinions concerning it by those who pretend to have unquestionable evidence on the subject of canonical and apocryphal books, we may form some idea how much confidence any of those books, whether called canonical or apocryphal, are entitled to. I will give sketches from Lempriere of the above-named fathers, &c. "Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamus, in Cyprus, born 332, and died 403. He was very conversant in ecclesiastical antiquities, on which account he is chiefly regarded. . . . Hilary, St., a native of Poictiers, in France, bishop of that town, in 355, was banished by Constantius into Phrygia, and died in 367. . . . Chrysostom, John, so called from his eloquence, was born at Antioch, of a noble family, about 354; consecrated Bishop of Constantinople in 398, and died in 407. The works of this father are very voluminous. . . . Cyril of Jerusalem, one of the fathers, died in 386. . . . Euthymius, an Isaurian, made Patriarch of Constantinople in 906. He was displaced, and died in exile, 910 or 911. . . . Theophylact, a native of Constantinople, Metropolitan of Bulgaria in the 11th century. He wrote a commentary on the Gospels, &c. . . . Œcumenius, a Greek writer of the 10th century. . . . Ambrose, St., an eminent father of the church, born in Gaul, 333. The birth of Ambrose is said to have been followed by a remarkable presage of his future eloquence; for we are told that a swarm of bees came and settled upon his mouth as he lay in his cradle. He died at Milan, 397, and was buried in the great church there. Ambrose carried the esteem of virginity and celibacy so far, that he seemed to regard matrimony as an indecent thing. . . . Bibliander, Theodore, professor of theology at Zurich, died in 1564."

This bee story reminds me of another statement of Lempriere, nearly of the same category.

"Heinecker, Christian Henry, an extraordinary youth, born at Lubeck in 1721. He spoke his maternal tongue fluently at ten months; at one year old he knew the principal events of the Pentateuch; in two months more he was master of the entire history of the Old and New Testaments; at two years and a half he answered the principal questions in geography, and in ancient and modern history. He spoke Latin and French, German and Low Dutch, with great facility, before the commencement of his fourth year, 1725, in which he died. His constitution was so delicate, that he was not weaned till a few months before his death."

Such scraps of history will, I should suppose, make every person who wishes to arrive at the truth, submit every historical statement to the test of reason. If it will abide that test, it may be received; for, if it should ultimately prove untrue, its having the assertion of history, and being reasonable, will certainly justify us in having believed it, so long as we found no good evidence against it; but if contrary to reason, it ought to be rejected, until we find some more reliable evidence in its favor than historical assertion. If modern history, which has the advantage of printing, making it very hard to alter or suppress facts once published, is so very questionable, ancient history must be a hundred fold more so, for it was in manuscript hundreds of years, in the hands of persons who could alter or suppress it at will.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

The Testaments, Old and New, Canonical and Apocryphal, carry on their face indubitable evidence that no infinitely wise, infinitely powerful, and infinitely good Being had any thing to do in the manufacturing of them. The Old Testament is such a work as we might reasonably expect to be produced by such a being as Moses's God, when under the control of such men as Moses and Aaron, and the successors of Moses and Aaron in office up to the time of the completion of the work; whether they were called elders, prophets, or kings. And the New Testament is such a work as reason would teach us to expect from men who had suffered under the errors, falsehoods, and tyranny of the Old Testament, but who had too superstitious a reverence for the individuals who manufactured that work to be able to clearly see the origin of the errors, falsehood, and tyranny under which they suffered. Therefore, in attempting to reform the abuses of their times, they produced a work which enlarged those abuses, and entailed them upon their posterity down to the present day; or, more correctly speaking, they produced the materials out of which that work has been framed, and it was put together some two to four hundred years after they had left the scene of action.

It is not quite certain by what council or at what time the New Testament was formed; that is to say, by what council or at what time the books which now compose the New Testament were collected into one volume. But it is

now, I believe, pretty generally conceded, that it was done by the first council of Nice; which council consisted of about three hundred bishops, and was held early in the fourth century, under the authority of Constantine, the Emperor of Rome. The editor of the Apocryphal New Testament, in his preface to the second edition of that work, says, —

"But the editor has been charged with expressing too little veneration for the council of the church. He feels none. It is true, that respecting the three hundred bishops assembled at the council of Nice, the Emperor Constantine says, that 'what was approved by these bishops could be nothing less than the determination of God himself; since the Holy Spirit, residing in such great and worthy souls, unfolded to them the divine will.' Yet Sabinus, the Bishop of Herclea, affirms that 'excepting Constantine himself, and Eusebius Pamphilus, *they were a set of illiterate, simple creatures, that understood nothing;*' and Pappus * seems to have estimated them very low, for in his Synodicon to that council, he tells us, that 'having promiscuously put all the books that were referred to the council for determination under the communion table in a church, they besought the Lord that the *inspired* writings might get upon top of the table, while the *spurious* ones remained underneath, and that it happened accordingly.' A commentator (Francis Mace) on this legend suggests, that nothing less than such a sight could sanctify that *fiery zeal* which breathes throughout an edict published by Constantine, in which he decrees that all the writings of Arius should be burned, and that any person concealing any writing composed by him, and

* *Pappus* — A philosopher and author, of Alexandria, in the fourth century. — *Lempriere.*

not immediately producing it, and committing to the flames, should be punished with death."

This account may serve to show what kind of stuff councils were made of, and how they were conducted in the early age of the church. I will give some account of one, comparatively of modern date, the council of Trent, in 1545. This council, Father Paul, who wrote a history of it, says, "was for divers ends, and by divers means, procured and hastened, hindered and deferred, for two and twenty years, and for eighteen more was sometimes assembled and sometimes dissolved." Sir Nathan Brent, a native of Wolford, Warwickshire, who died in 1652, a translator of Paul's history of that council, says, "It would be infinite to relate the stratagems the bishops of Rome used to divert the council before it began; their postings to and fro, to hinder the proposing of those things which they thought would diminish their profit or pull down their pride; and their policies to inthrall the prelates, and to procure a majority of voices." It is stated by that generally correct historian, Lewis Guicciardini, that, "as the priests were raised step by step to earthly power, they cared less and less for religious precepts. Using their spiritual only as an instrument of their temporal authority, their business was no more sanctity of life, increase of religion, and love and charity towards their neighbors, but fomenting wars among Christians, and employing all arts and snares to scrape money together, and *making new laws against the people.*"

It appears that there are known to have been one hundred and twenty-one books, under the names of Gospels, Epistles, Revelations, &c., &c., written as the history, views, doings, sayings, &c., of Jesus Christ. Of these we have twenty-seven, selected by somebody, and made into one

volume, called the New Testament, and declared canonical, and that they were written by divine authority. The question naturally arises, By whom was this done? The answer, perhaps, will be, By the church; but where did the church get such high authority? The clergy say, from God. Yes, but it was from Moses's God, a personage who, as I have before shown, had little wisdom, limited power, and no goodness. I will give a catalogue of the one hundred and twenty-one books mentioned.

First, the twenty-seven that constitute the New Testament; second, the twenty-four published as the Apocryphal New Testament; and third, the seventy that are known to have existed, but are now lost. Those of the New Testament — Matthew, Mark, Luke, John; the Acts, Epistle to the Romans, 1st Corinthians, 2d Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1st Thessalonians, 2d Thessalonians, 1st Timothy, 2d Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Epistle to the Hebrews, Epistle to James, 1st Peter, 2d Peter, 1st John, 2d John, 3d John, Jude, Revelation. Those of the Apocryphal New Testament — Mary, Protevangelion, 1st Infancy, 2d Infancy, Christ and Abgarus, Nicodemus, Apostles' Creed in its ancient state, Laodiceans, Paul and Seneca, Paul and Thecla, 1st Corinthians, 2d Corinthians, Barnabas, Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, Romans, Philadelphians, Smyrnans, Polycarp, Philippians, 1st Hermas — Visions, 2d Hermas — Commands, 3d Hermas — Similitudes.

Those that are lost I take from a List of the Apocryphal Pieces not now extant, mentioned by writers in the first four centuries of Christ, with the several works wherein they are cited or noticed, by the Rev. Jeremiah Jones.* In

* *Jeremiah Jones* — A dissenting divine, and author, died in 1724. — *Lempriere.*

this list there are a great many writers and works referred to by the author. These I have not copied, but only the names or titles of the books or pieces lost: the Acts of Andrew; books under the name of Andrew; the Gospel of Andrew; a Gospel under the name of Apelles; the Gospel according to the twelve Apostles; the Gospel of Barnabas; the Writings of Bartholomew the Apostle; the Gospel of Bartholomew; the Gospel of Basilides; the Gospel of Cerinthus, the Revelation of Cerinthus; an Epistle of Christ to Peter and Paul; some other books under the name of Christ; an Epistle of Christ, produced by the Manichees; a Hymn which Christ taught his Disciples; the Gospel according to the Egyptians; the Acts of the Apostles, made use of by the Ebionites; the Gospel of the Ebionites; the Gospel of the Encratites; the Gospel of Eve; the Gospel according to the Hebrews; the Book of the Helkesaites; the false Gospels of Hesychius; the Book of James; books forged and published under the name of James; the Acts of John; books under the name of John; a Gospel under the name of Jude; a Gospel under the name of Judas Iscariot; the Acts of the Apostles by Lucius; the Acts of the Apostles by Lintitius; the Books of Lintitius; the Acts under the Apostle's name, by Leontius; the Acts of the Apostles, by Leuthon; the false Gospels, published by Lucianus; the Acts of the Apostles, used by the Manichees; the Gospel of Marcion; books under the name of Matthew; the Gospel of Matthias; the Traditions of Matthias; a book under the name of Matthias; the Gospel of Merinthus; the Gospel according to the Nazarenes; the Acts of Paul and Thecla; the Acts of Paul; the Preaching of Paul (and Peter;) a book under the name of Paul; the Revelation of Paul; the Gospel of Perfection; the Acts of Peter; the Doctrine of Peter; the Gospel of Peter; the Judgment of Peter; the Preaching of Peter; the Revelation of Peter; books

under the name of Peter; the Acts of Philip; the Gospel of Philip; the Gospel of Scythianus; the Acts of the Apostles by Seleucus; the Revelation of Stephen; the Gospel of Titian; the Gospel of Thaddeus; the Catholic Epistle of Themison the Montanist: the Acts of Thomas; the Revelation of Thomas; books under the name of Thomas; the Gospel of Truth; the Gospel of Valentinus.

Out of these one hundred and twenty-one pieces, there might have been others on the same subject, of which we have no account. Some council, synod, person or persons, at some time or times, not now known, selected twenty-seven, and had them made into one book, called the New Testament. Who committed that assumption is not known; but it is known that no such book as that which is called the New Testament existed for several hundred years after Jesus Christ was crucified. And in some of these twenty-seven there have been made alterations, additions, and omissions since they have constituted that book. One addition I will notice, as by some it may be considered very important: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." (1 John v. 7.) Erasmus is said to have been the most learned man of the age in which he lived. In 1516 and 1519 he published his first and second editions of the Greek Testament, *both of which omitted the three heavenly witnesses.* Having promised to insert them in his next, if they were found in a single Greek manuscript, he was soon informed of the existence of such a manuscript in England, and consequently inserted 1st John v. 7 in his third edition, 1522. Sir Isaac Newton wrote a dissertation upon this passage, wherein he gave a clear, exact, and comprehensive view of the whole question, and wherein he says, that "when the adversaries of Erasmus had got the Trinity into his edition, they threw by their manuscript

as an old almanac out of date." Sir Isaac further observes, that "what the Latins have done to this text (1 John v. 7) the Greeks have done to Paul. (1 Tim. iii. 16.) They now read, 'Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh;' whereas all the churches for the first four or five hundred years, and the authors of all the ancient versions, Jerome as well as the rest, read, 'Great is the mystery of godliness, which was manifest in the flesh.' Our English version makes it yet a little stronger. It reads, 'Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.'"

Sir Isaac Newton wrote the "Dissertation" wherein the remarks above quoted as his occurred between the years 1690 and 1700, in the form of a letter to a friend. It was imperfectly published in 1754; but Bishop Horsley* printed the whole from an original manuscript; and in the bishop's edition Sir Isaac says, —

"If the ancient churches, in debating and deciding the greatest mysteries of religion, knew nothing of these two texts, I understand not why we should be so fond of them now the debate is over. And while it is the character of an honest man to be pleased, and of a man of interest to be troubled, at the detection of frauds, and of both to run most into those passions when detections are made plainest, I hope this letter, to one of your integrity, will prove so much the more acceptable, as it makes a further discovery than you have hitherto met with in commentaries."

* Horsley, Samuel, Bishop of St. Asaph. He became one of the most eminent men of his day, as a theologian, a mathematician, and a profound classic. The reverend prelate was many years a leading member of the Royal Society, but withdrew from it, as has been said, in consequence of a certain high appointment taking place of which he disapproved. His concluding words on retiring were, "I quit that temple where Philosophy once presided, and where Newton was her officiating minister." He died October 4, 1806. — *Lempriere.*

Thomas Jefferson, in a letter to John Adams, August 22, 1813, says, —

"It is too late in the day for men of sincerity to pretend they believe in the Platonic mysticism that three are one, and one is three, and yet that the one is not three, and the three are not one. But this constitutes the craft, the power, and profit of the priests. Sweep away their gossamer fabrics of fictitious religion, and they would catch no more flies."

It is doubtful whether many, if any, of the books which now constitute the New Testament were written by the persons whose names they severally bear, or at or near the time when they are said, by the Bible explainers, to have been written; for as they were laboring under the same disadvantages as Jesus labored under, — the persecution of the Jewish clergy, — we may reasonably conclude that they would be governed by those disadvantages as he was; that if they wished to circulate their doctrine among the people at large, for whose interest it was that Jesus commenced his reform, they, like him, would not have attempted to have done so by writing; for if the labor of that mode of instructing could have been performed, the writings would have been of very little or no use, so very few of the people could then read, and the vigilance of the priests and elders had not abated; so that any writings of those reformers, as early as the four Gospels are said to have been written, would almost certainly have been destroyed. Dr. Lardner says that Luke wrote his Gospel in the year of Jesus Christ 63; Matthew, 64; Mark, 64; John, 68. Luke, who, according to Dr. Lardner, wrote the first of the four Gospels, though it is not so placed in the volume, prefaces it as follows: —

"For as many have taken in hand to set forth in order

a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us which from the beginning were eye witnesses, ministers of the word, it seemeth good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed."

It is said that Luke was a physician at Antioch, converted to Christianity by the preaching of Paul; Paul was put to death in the year of Christ 66. The difference between the ages of Jesus and Paul, I think, could have been but little; and Luke about the same age. Lempriere says Theophilus was a writer, and bishop of the primitive church, born and educated a heathen, and afterwards converted to Christianity; he died in the year 182. The preface above copied is declared to be a preface to Luke's whole Gospel. The writer, in saying "it seemeth good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed," shows that he was a friend to Theophilus, and wrote that Gospel for his instruction; and in the expression, "that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed," appears to refer to his conversion from heathenism to Christianity.

Theophilus did not die until the year 182, as Luke was about the age of Jesus; and it would hardly be reasonable to suppose that he wrote after he was ninety years old. It is therefore pretty evident that the Gospel under his name was not written until about sixty to a hundred years after he was dead. In making these statements concerning the

authorship and the time of writing of the books of the New Testament, my object is merely to call attention to ancient history, whether it be called sacred or profane, wishing each person to examine and determine for himself or herself, whether any of these histories carry such internal or external evidence of their truth as to justify belief in the truth of statements there made, which are, as many of them are, contrary to common sense, reason, and experience. Not that I consider it of any importance to know who wrote those books, or when written; for it appears to me they carry on their face evidence of error, superstition, and falsehood.

We frequently hear it stated as a proof of the truth of Christianity that it has not been, like other religions, established by the sword. On that point I consider all religions are equal; none of them used the sword before they were strong; and each of them as soon as they became strong used the sword in the bitterest manner. Moses, while his people were in Egypt, surrounded by a stronger people, did not attempt to use the sword; but as soon as he got them out of Egypt, and had sufficiently established his authority over them, he most inhumanly put to death such, whether of his own people or others, as dared to refuse or to neglect to obey the command of his God. Mahomet for many years preached and persuaded among the people, and made proselytes very fast; but when his followers became very numerous, he then felt strong, and took the sword. The Christians were not strong enough to use the sword until they were joined by Constantine, Emperor of Rome, about the beginning of the fourth century, who was as infamous a tyrant as we have any record of; yet the clergy have dubbed him "Constantine the Great," as an honor, I suppose, for his services to the church.

At one time there were six individuals claiming to be Emperor of Rome, two of whom were Maxentius, son of Maximian, and brother to Constantine's wife. Maximian and his son Maxentius having had some difference, he left his son and went to his son-in-law Constantine, who accused his father-in-law of plotting against him, and put him to death. This was before Constantine turned Christian. Maxentius speedily provoked open hostilities with Constantine, who marched at the head of a powerful army towards Rome. It was while Constantine was proceeding on this momentous expedition that he made an open and public declaration in favor of Christianity. Of course there were a great many Christians who joined him and swelled the ranks of his army; and I presume the battle which was then fought between him and Maxentius was the first that was ever fought under the cross as a military banner, on either side, though perhaps there have been thousands fought since under it, as the principal banner on one side. The much celebrated *Labarum* was the standard raised by Constantine on that occasion, which standard is thus described: A long pike intersected by a transverse beam; a silken veil of a purple color hung down from the beam, ornamented with precious stones. The safety of the *Labarum* was intrusted to fifty guards of approved valor and fidelity. The Christian emperors, who respected the example of Constantine, displayed in all their military expeditions the standard of the cross. Constantine, before he marched against Maxentius, made a secret treaty with Licinius, one of the six claimants of the empire. He was successful in his expedition against Maxentius, and entirely overthrew him, who, in attempting to cross a bridge, was drowned in the Tiber. After a short stay at Rome, Constantine met Licinius at Milan, and there ratified their alliance by giving his sister in marriage to Licinius. That produced for

a while a calm; but there was yet one other of the six claimants, Maximian, who was not subdued. Licinius overthrew him, and he died at Nicomedia. Constantine and his brother-in-law were then the only two that remained of the six competitors for the empire.

After a while hostilities were commenced between them; Licinius was entirely stripped of his possessions and power, and Constantine declared sole master of the Roman world. Constantine, before he had the sole command of the empire, made Crispus, his son by his first wife, his partner in the command of his armies. Crispus was at the head of the administration in Gaul, where he gained the hearts of the people. In the wars against Licinius he displayed singular talents, and secured victory to the arms of his father. From that moment a shameful and unnatural jealousy stifled every paternal feeling in the monarch. He detained Crispus in his palace, surrounded him with spies and informers, and at length had him carried off to Pola, in Istria, and there put to death. A cousin of Crispus, the son of Licinius and Constantine's sister, was at the same time sent, without trial, without accusation, to the block. His mother implored in vain, and died of grief. Fausta, the daughter of Maximian, the wife of Constantine, and the mother of the three princes that succeeded him, was shortly after stifled in the bath by order of her husband. All these acts of injustice and murder he committed *after he turned Christian.* Constantine died in the year 337, aged sixty-three.

It appears to me that, after considering the character of Constantine, and the circumstances under which he was then acting, no person can believe that he espoused Christianity for any other purpose than to strengthen his des- power. There were four of the six claimants of the e, that were each making some exertion to sustain his

own claim; and we may reasonably suppose that each of them had numerous friends among the people, perhaps pretty equally divided. Constantine appears to have been a man of more shrewdness, experience, and enterprise than either of his competitors, Maxentius, Maximian, Licinius. They all being opposed to Christianity, a man of the talents of Constantine could not but see, that if he declared in favor of Christianity, and raised a banner suited to their prejudices, he would unite the whole of the Christians under his standard; and no doubt he considered that stroke of generalship the principal move which enabled him to overthrow and destroy Maxentius, his most powerful competitor, and finally raised him until he was acknowledged master of the Roman world.

And when he became acquainted with the leading principles of that religion, he could not see that the superstition and ignorance of the biographers of the original founder of it, their declaring him to be a God, &c., had (whatever might have been his object) rendered the religion which had been framed out of what was declared to be his precepts and commands, inefficacious in promoting any thing good, that is, any thing that would be of real benefit to society; and that the veil of mysteries and ceremonies, which had been subsequently thrown over it by the clergy, had rendered it so obscure, that by a crafty expounder it could be made to mean any thing, and prove every thing that the preacher or teacher wished to establish; and therefore the pest system of religion to establish and support despotic power that ever had been presented to the world. And its deleterious influence has been felt from that day to this, in the sufferings of justice, humanity, and morality, in every country throughout the length and breadth of what is called the civilized world.

CHAPTER XX.

FAITH.—CALVINISM.

The general Christian doctrine, that man is saved by faith, and not by works, and the Calvinist doctrine of particular redemption, &c., have done more in demoralizing society throughout what is called Christendom, than any other, perhaps than every other, doctrine which has ever attained any countenance among civilized nations. John P. Durbin, a Methodist preacher, in his fifth letter, published some years ago in the Gospel Trumpet, said:—

"The world has been strangely inclined to charge the Methodist church with the doctrine of seeking righteousness by works. But, sir, no church is clearer of this doctrine than she is. I think I have given pretty correctly the views of this church in the above discussion. She believes all holiness, or righteousness, results from faith in the atonement of Christ, and according to the proportion of faith (and not works) so is the holiness of any one."

He that is governed by faith is governed by the opinions of others, without submitting those opinions to the scrutiny of reason or common sense; he that builds what he calls belief on such evidence, can believe the most inconsistent declarations, as readily as he can well-authenticated facts; and, generally, will consider himself insulted if you doubt the correctness of any of his received opinions, and will defend them with more warmth and violence than he will truths which he has received from well-examined reasonable evidence, and candid and fair deduction. The Chris-

tian, the Mahometan, and the Mormon faith are all founded and built upon the Jew books now collected into one volume, called the Bible, or Old Testament. Each of these systems had a different architect, or builder; yet the foundation and principal framing of each of them is constructed of materials extracted from those books. The first five of those books, said to have been written by a Hebrew called Moses, who, his Christian, Mahometan, and Mormon followers say, was divinely inspired, may be said to contain the substance of all the other books published in that volume; they having been written, apparently, either to acknowledge the truth of Moses's statements, or to spread opinions and principles which the writer had imbibed from those statements.

Faith has induced thousands to receive and subscribe to Calvinism, which reason and common sense never could have done. The principal doctrine of Calvinism is contained in what are called the *five points;* which are predestination, particular redemption, total depravity, effectual calling, and the certain perseverance of the saints. Under the first head, they maintain that God has chosen a certain number of the fallen race of Adam, in Christ, before the foundation of the world, unto eternal glory, according to his immutable purpose, and of his free grace and love, without the least foresight of faith, good works, or any conditions performed by the creature; and that the rest of mankind he was pleased to pass by and ordain to dishonor and wrath, for their sins, to the praise of his vindictive justice.* Second, they maintain that though the death of Christ be a most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sins, of infinite value, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of

* That is certainly a singular kind of justice.

the whole world, and though on this ground the gospel is to be preached to all mankind indiscriminately, yet it was the will of God that Christ, by the blood of the cross, should efficiently redeem all those, and those only, who were from eternity elected to salvation, and given to him by the Father. Third, they maintain that mankind are totally depraved, in consequence of the fall of the first man, who being their public head, his sin involved the corruption of all his posterity, and which corruption extended over the whole soul, and rendered it unable to turn to God, or to any thing truly good, and exposes it to his righteous displeasure both in this world and that which is to come. Fourth, they maintain that all whom God hath predestinated unto life, he is pleased, in his appointed time, effectually to call, by his word and spirit, out of the state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ. Fifth and last, they maintain that those whom God has effectually called and sanctified by his spirit shall never finally fall from a state of grace.

They admit that true believers may fall partially, and would fall totally and finally but for the mercy and faithfulness of God, who keepeth the feet of the saints; also, that He who bestoweth the grace of perseverance bestoweth it by means of reading and hearing the word, meditation, exhortation, threatenings, and promises; but none of these things imply the possibility of a believer's falling from a state of justification.*

I have frequently heard it denied that Calvinists, or any others, believed these doctrines. They certainly do believe them, or, at least, they do pretend to believe them, as, I think, I will clearly show.

* These five points are in strict accordance with the character of the Bible God, whose most prominent traits, as recorded in that volume, are injustice and tyranny.

Extracts from a letter signed John W. Thomas, written to S. J. Lowe, editor and proprietor of The Regular Baptist, devoted to the Cause of God and Truth. The letter is dated Montgomery county, Indiana, November 13, 1847, and is published in the above paper, vol. ii., No. 13, Weston, Missouri, March 1, 1848. "Bro. S. J. Lowe: Occasionally having some minutes of leisure, I will submit to your disposal the following, which I consider Bible truths; they being thoughts on the doctrine of election, as therein clearly taught. 'Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated,' (Rom. ix. 11–13;) a clear example given to show that God as a Sovereign exercises his right in choosing from among his creatures those who shall inherit eternal glory without giving account for the divine procedure; and as Arminians of every grade will be condemning the Lord if election be true, alleging that God is partial and unjust, and that election is based on God's sovereignty, and not on some good work of him that is elected. The apostle shows that before either of the children were born or had done good or evil, their mother was told that the elder should serve the younger. (Mal. i. 2, 3.) 'I have loved you [Israel, the church] saith the Lord; yet ye say, Wherein [or for what] hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord; yet I have loved Jacob and hated Esau.' This recorded truth goes to show that Jacob and Esau were, under all considerations, upon equal footing and in the same condition and situation, where one was loved and the other hated, or one chosen and the other passed by, for neither of them were yet born; and had they been, their parentage could have been no reason why one was chosen and the other not, because both of the same. Nor had the one performed any good action nor the other any bad ones; so that Jacob was not loved for his good

works nor Esau hated for his bad ones, which confirms the truth of this doctrine; that the object of predestination, whether to life or passed by, are alike, whether considered in a corrupt mass as fallen, or in a pure mass of creatureship antecedent to sin's having entered into the world, yea, without any consideration of it, which is clearly proven by the above quotations. So there was not any thing in the one that was not in the other. Why was this difference made? The whole matter must therefore be resolved into the absolute sovereignty of God, it being his sovereign will and secret counsel; the why and wherefore we are unable to give, unless, as the Lord Jesus on another occasion answers, 'For even so, Father, it seemeth good in thy sight.'"

This being a letter from an individual, (if holding any particular authority in the church I know not,) it may be said to be no authority whereon to charge such opinions against the church. I will therefore copy a document published in the same paper, which appears to be of some authority. In copying said document I shall omit the numerous quotations made from different books, as my object is to show the opinions of the authors of the document, not the reasons why they have imbibed such opinions.

"The churches and brethren composing the Ketocton Association, convened at South River Creek, Warren county, Virginia, August 12, 13, and 14, 1847 — sendeth greeting: —

"Dearly beloved in the Lord: Another annual meeting affords an opportunity of addressing to you another circular letter; and as it has been the practice for a long time of this Association to treat on some particular subject, we would pursue the practice, by calling your attention to the soul-cheering and heart-reviving doctrine, particular elec-

tion.* And as it is a fundamental truth, and as there is a great difference among professors of Christianity as to the meaning of the expressions of election according to the foreknowledge of God, &c., this Association takes this plan of expressing her views on the above expressions. We believe that God has a particular people elected to eternal life, and redeemed out of every kingdom, and tongue, and nation, and people, of Adam's posterity, chosen of God in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world. For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good nor evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth. Thus it is clear that particular election unto eternal life is fully supported in the elect, and none others. These two points of doctrine are inseparable, viz., particular election and particular redemption; they cover precisely the same ground, as appears by the foregoing quotations. And they are discriminating truths which none but those who are born of God can believe, and receive in the love of them. Dear brethren, by your indulgence we will pursue

* "The soul-cheering and heart-reviving doctrine, particular election." Soul-cheering! Heart-reviving! To whom? To the good? No. It may be, perhaps, to the scoundrel, and to the desperado. If elected, nothing that they can say or do can debar their claim to inherit eternal glory. They have the decree of their God in their favor, which they consider cannot be set aside. It cannot be soul-cheering or heart-reviving to the good man, even if he considers himself one of the favored number, when he reflects that, by the election of one part to everlasting glory, the other part was reprobated to eternal punishment. Not that the elected part had done any good, or the rejected part any evil; but, so the advocates of the system declare, was done because their God is Sovereign; therefore has the power as well as the will to do so. Is it possible to invent a system of belief more directly calculated to expel from society justice, benevolence, and humanity, and to obliterate every vestige of correct morals?

this pleasing subject still further. The doctrine of particular election is in perfect accordance with the self-existent and unchangeable character of God. For if God can change, or can obtain any knowledge of any thing that is not perfectly known to him from the beginning, or if he can be influenced by any thing out of himself, then particular election would not be true. But if God is what he has declared himself to be, as he has made known by the Scriptures, then particular election must be true according to the self-existence and unchangeable character he has given of himself.

"Particular election is the act of God's sovereign will, and is perfectly consistent with his sovereignty. Where is the power that dares to call God to answer for his procedure, or dares ask him why he does thus or thus? He has an indisputable and unquestionable right, and doth work all things after the counsel of his own will. In particular election are developed the justice and goodness of God. The whole family of Adam having in him transgressed the law of God, in him, their head, they all became sinners, and subject to the penalty of the law, which is death. The posterity of Adam, by his transgression, having sinned against God, must have sunk with the load of their sin; for the justice of God demanded that the sinner should die to answer the penalty of the law. But God, as a manifestation of his goodness and grace, elected a people unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ, who were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world; and all the iniquities of the elect, or chosen of God, were laid upon Christ, their head, and he bore their sins and their iniquities in his own body on the tree. Forasmuch, then, as Christ undertook for all the Father gave, he must answer in their stead the requisition of law. He was not spared of God, for the cup of

God's justice could not pass from him; he must drink the bitter draught of the most painful death. He suffered the justice of God in the place of his chosen. If Christ suffered for them, justice requires their justification. And also, dear brethren, you all know by happy experience what a great comfort the truth of election was to you when you saw the justice of God in your condemnation; and when you were enlightened to see that you could be saved for what Jesus Christ had done for you, and nothing you had done for yourselves, then you saw how he could be just, and save you for Jesus' sake, having been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. And then also you rejoice in the great and glorious plan of salvation by grace. You have known many turn away from the simplicity of the gospel and follow fables, and many forsake the old paths and follow new inventions, greatly to the grief of the church, as if it would come to dissolution. O, then, how sweet to you was the truth of election in the words of the apostle! And what comfort and support you have experienced when pressed down with losses, crosses, and affliction, almost ready to conclude they were sent upon you as judgments!

"In conclusion, dear brethren, the doctrine of election is a scriptural truth, through which the excellences of the divine attributes shine forth, and it is most certainly a delightful truth to the children of God. We refer you to your messengers and the minutes for information relative to the Association business. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory, forever and ever, amen.

THOMAS BUCK, *Moderator.*

PHILIP A. KLIPSTEIN, *Clerk.*"

Let us examine some of the principles shown forth in these two letters, supporting the Calvinistic Five Points. "We believe that God has a particular people elected to eternal life, and redeemed out of every kingdom, and tongue, and nation, and people, of Adam's posterity, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. These two points of doctrine are inseparable, viz., particular election and particular redemption." Here it is positively declared that they believe that God, before he made a single human being, elected a certain part out of all that ever was to come into existence, which he would render supremely and eternally happy, and all the rest eternally miserable. Not that the one part had done, or would do, any good, or the other part any evil, but because it was his sovereign will so to do; and they declare, therefore, the act to be right and just. The idea that a powerful being, or, as they express it, a sovereign, has a right to do that which is in itself wrong, I most solemnly protest against. If the two parties —the elected and the rejected, were equally good, or equally bad, (and these believers declare that they were equals,) the act which elected, or selected, the one to happiness, and rejected or condemned the other to misery, was an act of injustice and tyranny, however powerful, and by whatever name called, the being might have been that committed it. If the being that did that act was infinitely wise, (infinitely good he certainly was not,) the whole matter was present to him; and when he elected one part, he condemned by that election the other part; and these wise believers declare that God will not change, and that he cannot be influenced by any thing out of himself. Then why are they continually addressing to him petitions and prayers? O, these petitions and prayers give employment

to the clergy, and that employment produces to them an easy and good living. True, it generally comes off the hard earnings of the laboring classes of society.

But these letters are perfectly consistent when we recollect that they were written by, and addressed to, persons who worshipped Moses's God. Do seriously examine the doctrines contained in the foregoing letters, and the doctrine that all will be rewarded or punished according to their belief, whether works be good or bad, which is the fundamental doctrine of Christianity, Mahometanism, and Mormonism; and then candidly reflect on such examination, and determine in your own mind whether you think it possible that any community that worships such a God, and that receives and inculcates such doctrines, ever can, while they do so, become a moral community. And what a deleterious effect must the reading of this miscalled holy book (the Bible) have upon honest minds, that have been taught from their infancy to believe, or at least to say they believe, it to be the word of God, and therefore cannot contain any thing but undeniable truths; when the reader finds in many parts of this book acts of the basest injustice and crime, and there declared to have been by the express command of God; while they have been instructed that this God (Moses's God,) is a being of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness! Certainly such minds will be embarrassed and bewildered by endeavoring to reconcile such miserable inconsistencies.

CHAPTER XXI.

BELIEF. — GOD.

It is generally said, and I believe pretty generally thought, that every person must either believe or disbelieve every proposition submitted to him. With respect to those who base their belief on faith, that is, on testimony, that assertion may be true; but concerning such as found their belief on evidence drawn from facts scrutinized by reason and common sense, that assertion is not true. He that bases his belief on faith or testimony looks to the character of the testifier. If the testifier be, in his estimation, a person of piety, learning, high station, or any other real or supposed quality that entitles to belief, he believes the testimony; but if he forms a different estimate of the testifier, then he disbelieves the testimony; and this is the process of examination which every proposition presented to his mind goes through; therefore in all cases he believes or disbelieves. He that founds his belief upon evidence drawn from facts submitted to the scrutiny of reason and common sense, will sometimes find that all the facts which he can collect and so submit do not, to his mind, present evidence sufficient to enable him to believe or disbelieve, as to the truth or falsehood of the proposition which he has under consideration.

If a person says that he does not believe the existence of a God, the general declaration is, that that person is an atheist; yet such declaration may be entirely false. He may have examined that subject to the best of his ability, by collecting all the supposed evidence (not testimony, for I

have shown, I think, that testimony not supported by reason and common sense is not evidence) for and against the truth of that proposition; yet he finds that he has not on either side sufficient evidence whereon he can build a reasonable belief. He therefore does not believe, neither does he disbelieve or deny, the existence of a God. Of course he is not an atheist.

Some twenty-five years ago there were four or five, perhaps more, men conversing on theological opinions; one of them, a man of warm passions, and very quick and rather harsh expressions, who was directing his conversation more to me than to any other of the company, said that he could prove that there was no God. I observed to him that I would be glad to see his proof; that I had thought considably on that subject, and had examined many things which I had heard advanced as proof for or against, as far as my situation in life would conveniently permit me; but that I was far from being prepared to give a decided opinion on that subject. After a little more conversation he appeared to wander from the subject. I called his attention to his proof; he said that he did not say that he could prove there was no God. The company declared to him that he certainly said so; he then made some apology; the precise terms I do not recollect, but the substance was, that he must have expressed himself in much stronger terms than he intended; that what he intended to have said was, that there was much stronger proof against the existence of a God than there was in favor of it. The subject was then dropped, for to go into an examination of evidence for and against it would require more time and labor than any of us thought we could so appropriate.

But the difficulty of collecting evidence for and against the existence of Moses's God is not so great. On the one

side we have the testimony of Moses, and other such characters, that he does or did exist. On the other side we have the history of that God, written by Moses and others, which exhibits a character so utterly at variance with every principle which a rational being can attribute to a divine being, that such as found their belief on evidence drawn from facts submitted to the test of reason and common sense cannot believe that any such God ever existed; but that a visionary being, answering to the character of that supposed God, has been, by the tyranny of Moses and others, and by the hypocrisy of their clergy, for thousands of years, imposed on the credulous and superstitious as a real God; which imposition has, and now does, enable tyrants and clergy to live in luxury and crime on the hard earnings of labor, while in many instances the laborer and his family are starving. I have in the preceding pages given some of the acts of that visionary God, and will give more when I treat of morals.

The historians of Moses's God, and of his doings, state many things which he did as having been done to show his power; and the most of those doings were as unjust, cruel, and wicked acts as any being could be guilty of. Why should a God wish to show his power? A real God, that is, a being of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, if there be such a being, can have no need, and therefore no wish, to show his power, wisdom, or goodness. Such a being will of course do a great deal of good, not to show his goodness, but being good, wise, and powerful, his acts will all be good. Not so with Moses's God; for it was on his supposed power that Moses's real power was built. It was therefore the interest of Moses and his minions to instil into the minds of the many, that his God was a being of great power, and very jealous of his sovereignty and glory, and

prompt in revenging any neglect in readily executing his commands; for as long as he could keep that idea uppermost in the minds of the masses, these commands being all issued through him or his clergy, he could sustain his own power, and that of all others which he desired.

That same idea respecting that same God, that is, his great jealousy of the infraction of his sovereignty and glory, is, in every country called civilized, and at this boasted age of superior knowledge, by craft, hypocrisy, and superstition, infused into the minds of all persons, from their cradle to their grave. The idea that a being infinitely wise, powerful, and good, and of course infinitely happy, can be jealous, appears to me to be as inconsistent and ridiculous an idea as could emanate from the brain of a rational being. Who or what is such infinite being to be jealous of? Is there any person or thing that can mar the power or happiness of such a being in any respect? That being into whose mind jealousy has entered, can hardly be considered a tolerably happy being, much less infinitely happy. The idea that such infinite being requires service of any other being, is an idea of the same category as that of jealousy in such a being. How can we serve such a being? What service does he need? We being finite, and the being which we are considering infinite, forbid the idea of our being able to serve him; his infinite wisdom and power exclude all idea of his needing any service; and his infinite goodness is assurance which we cannot doubt, that he will not require of us that which he does not need. Yet we can in many ways serve our fellow-man; but from erroneous teachings, and long subservient habit, a great majority of men and women have become like children. That which is not necessary to be done, and that which they cannot do, they are, generally, very willing to try to do; while that which is necessary to

be done, and which they can do, is but seldom attended to, and then but partially done. The greatest possible service that any individual can render to a community is, to use his talents and time, as far as is consistent with the necessary support of himself and family, in exertions to have, and to keep, society so organized as that every individual shall, as far as possible, receive strict justice; and that each member of the community shall enjoy the largest liberty consistent with good order and sound morality.

Deists have created a God; for if there be a God, I am convinced that they do not know it; but they have not divided him into three, or two, parts, persons, or things. They consider him omnipresent, infinite in wisdom, power, and goodness; and that infinite wisdom must know the best, and that infinite power and goodness will do the best. Deists do not perform any outward worship; they therefore do not build costly temples, and hire priests or preachers to say long prayers, and perform many other monkish ceremonies in such temples, to keep their God in a good humor, as do the Jews, the Christians, the Mahometans, the Mormons, &c. The belief in the existence of such a God as the Deists have created would not inflict any evils on society, except that it might induce some to depend on his assistance, when they ought to rely on their own exertions. Some fifty years ago, or more, I candidly thought myself a Deist; acknowledged myself to be such, was so called, and, I believe, so considered by all who were intimately acquainted with me. But subsequent investigation and reasoning have, many years since, convinced me that what I then thought to be belief was but little more than an acquiescence in the opinions and assertions of others, without having properly exercised my own examining and reasoning powers. We hear it said every day, by wise persons,

and by ignorant persons, that every thing must have had a cause, that nothing can exist without a cause. Let us investigate these bold assertions.

The Great First Cause, which these persons declare to be the cause of every thing else, they acknowledge exists without a cause. Then there is something that does exist without a cause. But it is a something that they, myself, nor you know any thing about.

CHAPTER XXII.

TIME, SPACE, AND MATTER.—WORLD MAKING.

Of the three most important things that do exist, we do know something; yet it must be acknowledged that we know but very little of these three, notwithstanding we live in the midst of them. Time, space, and matter surround us on every side. The coeternal existence of time and space, I think, will not be denied by any person; for it appears to me that it would be perfectly ridiculous to say that there was a time when there was no time, and equally as ridiculous to say that there was a time when there was no space. Then there are two things of which we have some knowledge, that have eternally existed; that which has eternally existed could not have had a cause of its existence, for the cause must be older than the effect. We can only reason concerning what we do not know of a thing from what we do know of it. We do know that matter occupies every part of space to which we have, by any means whatever, any ac-

cess, and we know not of any means by which we can prevent its occupancy; and notwithstanding that time is continually making innumerable changes in matter, we have no reason to believe that it ever does or can destroy a single particle of it. As matter, so far as we can examine, coextensively exists with time and space, and as we have no reasonable evidence that either time or space, or the two conjointly, created matter, then, reasoning from what we do know to what we do not know of it, we are compelled to admit that the reasonable conclusion is, that matter coextensively and coeternally existed with time and space, and that nothing can be added to it, nor any thing taken from it; that, therefore, it eternally has possessed the same properties and power which it now possesses.

There has been, I suppose, first and last, some thousands of persons who have employed themselves in world making, and accounting for things being as we find them. If it were necessary for me to form a system on that subject, it would be about this: That time, space, and matter have coextensively and eternally existed. Time, I would denominate nature, or the operator; space, the field for operation; and the different kinds of matter, the materials to be operated on. This operator having been eternally at work, its productions, as a whole, had no beginning, nor, as a whole, will they ever have an end; yet each particular operation may have its limits of both extent and duration, as each portion of time and of space has its beginning and its end, yet neither time nor space, taken as a whole, have either beginning or end; and to the eternal operations of time on matter, the innumerable changes it is continually producing, and has been producing through all eternity, I would attribute the appearances and effects which surround us. Time, space, and matter, I have said, are the principa.

things of which we have any knowledge. I would say, that they are the only things of which we have any real knowledge, or of which we have any reliable evidence. It is contrary to sound reason and consistent philosophy to introduce a supposed something, of the existence of which we have no reliable evidence, to account for appearances and effects which the existences of which we have positive knowledge, may have, by their eternal and varied actions, produced.

Time has portions, but not proportions. Portion is part of a thing without reference to the whole; proportion is a part, or ratio, that will measure the whole. A second, or less, a minute, an hour, a day, a year is each a portion of time; yet no number of seconds, minutes, hours, days, or years can bear any proportion to the whole of time; for that which never had a beginning cannot be measured. The reasoning which is applicable to time is equally cogent when applied to space. An inch, or less, a foot, a yard, a rod, a mile, each is a portion of space; but no number of inches, feet, yards, rods, or miles can be accounted a proportion of space; because, like time, it cannot be measured; for the plain, simple reason, there is no place to begin, nor is there any place to end. There are several kinds, or different qualities of matter — solid, fluid, atmospheric air, gases, or aeriform fluids, &c.; that is, they appear to our senses to be different; but we are liable to be much deceived respecting the composition and the properties of things which we suppose ourselves well acquainted with. For instance, sugar and starch; these we can examine with four of our senses at least; we can see them, we can feel them, we can taste them, we can smell them, and to not one of these senses do they appear to be in the least akin to each other. Yet their composition is almost identical; the

same may be said of diamond and charcoal, and other substances. Oxygen gas and hydrogen gas, mixed together in a certain proportion, produce water. Oxygen gas is the supporter of ordinary combustion; is a permanently elastic fluid, invisible, inodorous, and a little heavier than atmospheric air. Hydrogen gas is an aeriform fluid, the lightest body known, and though extremely inflammable itself, it extinguishes burning bodies, and is fatal to animal life: there are two substances, neither of which appear to have the least affinity to water, but when mixed in a certain proportion (and only that proportion will produce it) the compound is water.

CHAPTER XXIII.

NATURAL HISTORY OF CREATION. — ORGANIC CREATURES AND DEVELOPMENT.

THE author of "Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation" says, —

"The gas oxygen is considered as by far the most abundant substance in our globe. It constitutes a fifth part of our atmosphere, a third part of water, and a large proportion of every kind of rock in the crust of the earth. Hydrogen, which forms two thirds of water, and enters into some mineral substances, is perhaps the next. Nitrogen, of which the atmosphere is four fifths composed, must be considered as an abundant substance. The metal silicium, which unites with oxygen in nearly equal parts to form silica, the basis of nearly half the rocks in the earth's crust,

is, of course, an important ingredient. Aluminum, the metallic basis of alumine, a large material in many rocks, is another abundant elementary substance. So also is carbon, a small ingredient in the atmosphere, but the chief constituent of animal and vegetable substances, and of fossils which ever were in the latter condition, among which coal takes a conspicuous place. The familiarly-known metals, as iron, tin, lead, silver, gold, are elements of comparatively small magnitude in the exterior part of the earth's body which we are able to investigate. It is remarkable of the simple substances that they are generally in some compound form. Thus oxygen and nitrogen, though in union they form the aerial envelope of the globe, are never found separate in nature. Carbon is pure only in the diamond. And the metallic bases of the earths, though the chemist can disengage them, may well be supposed unlikely to remain long uncombined, seeing that contact with moisture makes them burn. Combination and recombination are principles largely pervading nature.

"There are few rocks, for example, that are not composed of at least two varieties of matter, each of which is again a compound of elementary substances. What is still more wonderful with respect to this principle of combination, all the elementary substances observe certain mathematical proportions in their union. One volume of them unites with one, two, three, or more volumes of another, any extra quantity being sure to be left over, if any such there should be. It is hence supposed that matter is composed of infinitely minute particles or atoms, each of which belonging to any one substance, can only (through the operation of some as yet hidden law) associate with a certain number of atoms of any other. There are also strange predilections amongst substances for each other's company. One will

remain combined in solution with another, till a third is added, when it will abandon the former and attach itself to the latter. A fourth being added, the third will perhaps leave the first and join the new comer. Such is an outline of the information which chemistry gives us regarding the constituent materials of our globe. How infinitely is the knowledge increased in interest when we consider the probability of such being the materials of the whole of the bodies of space, and the laws under which these every where combine, subject only to local and accidental variations.

"Fifty years ago science possessed no facts regarding the origin of organic creatures upon earth; as far as knowledge acquired through the ordinary means was concerned, all was a blank antecedent to the first chapters of what we usually call ancient history. Within that time, by researches in the crust of the earth, we have obtained a bold outline of the history of the globe during what appears to have been a vast chronology intervening between its formation and the appearance of the human race upon its surface. It is shown, on powerful evidence, that during this time strata of various thickness were deposited in seas, each in succession being composed of matters worn away from the previous rocks; volcanic agency broke up the strata, and projected chains of mountains; sea and land repeatedly changed conditions; in short, the whole of the arrangements which we see prevailing in the earth's crust took place, and that, most undoubtedly, under the influence of natural laws which we yet see operating. The remains and traces of plants and animals found in the succession of strata show that while these operations were going on the earth gradually became the theatre of organic beings; simple forms appearing first, and more complicated afterwards.

A time when there was no life is first seen; we then *see life begin and go on;* but whole ages elapsed before man came to crown the work of nature. This is a wonderful revelation to have come upon the men of our time, and one which the philosophers of the days of Newton could never have expected to be vouchsafed. The great fact established by it is, that the organic creation, as we now see it, was not placed upon the earth at once — it observed a progress. Now we can *imagine* the Deity calling a young plant or animal into existence instantaneously; but we see that he does not usually do so. The young plant, and also the young animal, go through a series of conditions, advancing them from a mere germ to the fully developed repetition of the respective parental forms. So, also, we can *imagine* divine power evoking a whole creation into being by one work; but we find that such had been his mode of working in that instance; for geology fully proves that organic creation passed through a series of stages before the highest vegetable and animal forms appeared. Here we have the first hint of organic creation having arisen in the manner of natural order. The analogy does not prove identity of causes, but it surely points very broadly to natural order or law having been the mode of procedure in both instances.

"We have yet to advert to the most interesting class of facts connected with the laws of organic development. It is only in recent times that physiologists have observed that each animal passes, in the course of its germinal history, through a series of changes resembling the *permanent forms* of the various orders of animals inferior to it in the scale. Thus, for instance, an insect standing at the head of the articulated animals is in the larva state, a true annelid, or worm, the annelida being the lowest in the same class. The

embryo of a crab resembles the perfect animal of the inferior order myriapoda, and passes through all the forms of transition which characterize the intermediate tribes of crustacea. The frog, for some time after its birth, is a fish with external gills, and other organs fitting it for aquatic life, all of which is changed as it advances to maturity, and becomes a land animal. The mammifer only passes through still more stages, according to its higher place in the scale. Nor is man himself exempt from this law. His first form is that which is permanent in the animalcule. His organization gradually passes through conditions generally resembling a fish, a reptile, a bird, and the lower mammalia, before it attains its specific maturity. At one of the last stages of his fœtal career he exhibits an intermaxillary bone, which is characteristic of the perfect ape; this is suppressed; and he may then be said to take leave of the simial type, and become a true human creature.

"Even, as we shall see, the varieties of his race are represented in the progressive development in an individual of the highest, before we see the adult Caucasian, the highest in the animal scale. To come to particular points of the organization. The brain of man, which exceeds that of all other animals in complexity of organization and fulness of development, is, at one early period, only a simple fold of nervous matter, with difficulty distinguishable into three parts, while a little tail-like prolongation towards the hinder parts, and which had been the first to appear, is the only representation of a spinal marrow. Now, in this state it perfectly resembles the brain of an adult fish, thus assuming, *in transitu*, the form that in the fish is permanent. In a short time, however, the structure is become more complex, the parts are more distinct, the spinal marrow better marked: it is now the brain of a reptile. The change

continues; by a singular motion certain parts (*corpora quadragemina*) which had hitherto appeared on the upper surface now pass towards the lower; the former is their permanent situation in fishes and reptiles, the latter in birds and mammalia. This is another advance in the scale; but more remains yet to be done. The complication of the organ increases; cavities termed ventricles are formed, which do not exist in fish, reptiles, or birds; curiously organized parts, such as the *corpora striata*, are added: it is the brain of mammalia. Its last and final change alone seems wanting — that which shall render it the brain of a man.* And this change in time takes place. So also with the heart. This organ in the mammalia consists of four cavities, but in the reptiles of only three, and in fishes only two, while in articulated animals it is merely a prolonged tube. Now, in the mammal fœtus, at certain early stage, the organ has the form of a prolonged tube; and a human being may then be said to have the heart of an insect. Subsequently it is shortened and widened, and becomes divided by a contraction into two parts, a ventricle and an auricle: it is now the heart of a fish. A subdivision of the auricle afterwards makes it a triple-chambered form, as in the heart of the reptile tribes; lastly, the ventricle being also divided, it becomes a full mammal heart.

"Time is the true key of difficulties regarding appearances of determinateness in species. Few of us, not even geologists, have ever realized in our minds the extent of time which has elapsed since the beginning of life upon this globe. Mr. Lyell, without intending to favor the development theory, lends us powerful testimony on this

* Lord's Popular Physiology. It is to Tiedemann that we chiefly owe these curious observations; but ground was first broken in this branch of physiological science by Dr. John Hunter.

point. After showing reason to believe that about thirty-five thousand years have passed since the Niagara began to cut down the rock through which it flows, during which time the living mollusks,* whether marine or terrestrial, are proved to have undergone no change, he thus proceeds: 'If such events can take place, while the zoölogy of the earth remains almost stationary and unaltered, what ages may not be comprehended in those successive tertiary † periods, during which the flora ‡ and fauna § of the globe have been almost entirely changed? Yet how subordinate a place in the long calendar of geological chronology do the successive tertiary periods themselves occupy? How much more enormous a duration must we assign to many antecedent revolutions of the earth and its inhabitants? No analogy can be found in the natural world to the immense scale of these divisions of past time, unless we contemplate the celestial spaces which have been measured by the astronomer. Some of the nearest of these within the limits of the solar system, as, for example, the orbits of the planets, are reckoned by hundreds of millions of miles, which the imagination in vain endeavors to grasp. Yet one of these spaces, such as the diameter of the earth's orbit, is regarded as a mere unit, a mere infinitesimal fraction of the distance which separates our sun from the nearest star. By pursuing still farther the same investigations, we learn that there are luminous clouds, scarcely distinguishable by the naked eye, but resolvable by the telescope into clusters of stars, which are so much more remote that the interval between our sun and Sirius may be but a fraction of the larger distance. *To regions of space of this higher order in point*

* Snails, oysters, &c.
† Strata later than the chalk.
‡ Plants.
§ Animals.

of magnitude we may, probably, compare such an interval of time as that which divides the human epoch from the origin of the coralline limestone over which the Niagara is precipitated at the falls. Many have been the successive revolutions in organic life, and many the vicissitudes in the physical geography of the globe, and often has sea been converted into land, since that rock was formed. The Alps, the Pyrenees, the Himalaya, have not only begun to exist as lofty mountains, but the solid materials of which they are composed have been slowly elaborated beneath the sea within the stupendous interval of ages here alluded to.

"There is still a difficulty of accounting for the origination of the first forms of life in the various lines afterwards pursued to high development. How was the inorganic converted into the first rudiments of the organic? Whence and of what nature was the impulse that first kindled sensation and intelligence upon this sphere? A suggestion on these subjects is hazarded in my book; but though we were to consider the matter as an entire mystery, it is, after all, only so in the same degree and to the same effect as the commencement of a new being from a little germ is a mystery to us, although we know that it is one of the most familiar of all natural events. This last marvel we know to be under natural law, though we cannot otherwise explain it. If we can regard the origin and development of life upon our planet as having been equally under natural law, the whole point is gained; for we are not as much inquiring in order to say *how, as was it within or beyond the natural?* We have seen, then, as I conceive, that all the associated truths of science go to one point. The whole concur to say that to believe an exception in this particular of the history of nature is an absurdity. Difficulties there may be in treating the case positively; some facts of inferior im-

portance may seem to point to an opposite conclusion; but in balance of the two sets of evidences, those for the universality of natural law down-weigh the other beyond calculation."

Dr. Frederic Hollick, in the Origin of Life, says, —

"There are few subjects upon which physiologists have less agreed, than the nature of the process by which the human being is evolved from the generative elements."

In speaking of the different theories on this subject, he says, —

"*Theory of Evolution.* — This theory, like that of the ovists, supposes the fœtus to be solely derived from the mother. But it also supposes it existed before sexual intercourse; that is, it supposes the rudiment, in the germ, to contain the fœtus with all its parts perfect, only on a small scale, and that perfect rudiment always existed. The ordinary process of reproduction, therefore, according to this view, consists merely of the *evolution*, further development, or growth, of one of these germs into a perfect human being."

CHAPTER XXIV.

MORALS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE true definition of *moral* is, I think, as given in the first paragraph of the first definition in Webster's Dictionary, which is, "Relating to the practice, manners, or conduct of men, in relation to each other, and with reference to right and wrong." That is the only sense in which I herein use the words *moral*, *morals*, and *morality*, or in which I have ever used them any where. Religious requirements cannot be considered moral precepts; for he that acts from an expectation or hope of reward, or from fear of punishment, is not entitled to the character of a moral being, be the acts what they may. No being is worthy to be characterized a moral being, let his acts be what they may, unless he is governed by a conviction that the act which he is about to perform is just and right, and therefore ought to be done. Religious communities may require the performance of certain things, or ceremonies, and promise rewards to such as comply with those requirements; and they may forbid the doing of other things, and threaten punishment to be inflicted on the offender; and civil governments may make laws, good and bad, and annex penalties thereto to be inflicted upon the violators of them. The correct performance of all these requirements will be placed on a scale of moral obligations, by a mind regulated by justice and correct views, far below true moral acts. Yet, under certain circumstances, the correct moralist may feel it his duty not to violate even those requirements, or laws,

which he may deem to be unjust, and therefore immoral; for he himself, and those which it is his immediate duty to protect, are a part of society; therefore, if by violation, or omission, he would draw upon himself, or any of those under his immediate care, the penalty of law, he would feel it his duty to acquiesce for the time being. But he would also deem it his duty to exert every legal and moral means in his power to have the unjust requirement or law so far abrogated as to be inoperative on any as a member of general society; for it is the aim and end of every true moralist to augment the happiness of every member of society.

There are very few moral precepts in what is called the Old Testament, and fewer correct moral acts done by the people whose history it gives, than by any other people of whom we have even one tenth as large a history. But there are baser immoral acts, and perhaps more of them, than can be found in the doings of any other people; and yet we are, by the clergy, continually recommended to and threatened with eternal punishment if we do not search that book, under the title of the Holy Bible, as a standard system of morals. I will give a few of the many nefarious doings of Moses's God, of Moses, Joshua, and some others.

There is some diversity of opinion concerning what is or what is not moral. I consider every act voluntarily done, without reward, by a rational being, which increases the happiness of any sensitive being, without lessening the happiness of any other sensitive being in its progress through life, is a moral act; and that every act of a rational being which lessens the happiness of a sensitive being in its progress through life, is so far an immoral act; in short, that justice is morality, and injustice is immorality.

"And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it, cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." (Gen. iii. 14–19.) That is certainly heavy cursing. The Lord promised Abraham, saying, "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee." (Gen. xii. 3.) That was blessing and cursing at random.

"And Noah drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. . . . And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren."

Here is a most cruel and infamous curse by Noah on his grandson, for an offence committed by his son. His son, it appears to me, acted correctly, when he saw his father's exposed situation, to his two older brothers, by taking a cover

and going into the tent backwards and covering him. But certainly Canaan had committed no offence.

When Abram was about to enter into Egypt, notwithstanding the great promises made to him by his God, he became afraid of the Egyptians; and thinking that if they supposed him to be the brother of Sarai, they would treat him well for her sake, for she was "a fair woman to look upon," he requested her, saying, "Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister." (Gen. xii. 3.) And she did so. Sarai, it is said, was barren, but her handmaid had a son by Abraham; and some years afterwards Sarai had a son also; and when Sarai's son had grown to be weaned, Abram turned Hagar, the handmaid, and her son, out of his house, with nothing for their support, except some bread and a bottle of water, to ramble and starve in the wilderness, unless they could meet with some person of more humanity and correct principles than he possessed, while he was rich and living sumptuously. Abram, whose name is changed to Abraham, and his wife Sarai, whose name is changed to Sarah, having fared so well in Egypt by lying, they both, when they went to Gerar, pursued the same treacherous policy, and succeeded still better. (Gen. xx. 5.)

Isaac, and Rebekah his wife, at a time of famine in the country where they lived, went to the same place, Gerar, where his father and mother fared so well; and by lying, received the foundation of wealth and distinction. (Gen. xxvi. 7, 13.) Esau and Jacob were twin brothers. After they were grown, their parents being old, Esau, being a hunter, had been out, we may reasonably suppose, seeking provision for the family. He came in much fatigued and hungry, and said, "I am at the point to die." (Gen. xxv. 32.) His brother had some pottage ready for eating; Esau asked him for some, and Jacob refused to let him

have any, only on condition that he would transfer his birthright to him. Esau, being "at the point to die," concluded that his birthright would be of no use to him, and made the transfer as demanded. Jacob, being counselled and assisted by his mother, swindled his father, by the grossest lying, and hypocritical and deceptive tricks, of the blessing which his father intended to confer, and thought he was conferring on Esau. (Gen. xxvii. 15.)

Jacob married two wives, sisters, and also took two concubines. From Moses's record it appears that Jacob, by some legerdemain tricks concerning the increase of the flocks of his father-in-law Laban, managed to cheat his father-in-law so as to become rich. (Gen. xxx. 43.) Jacob, discovering by their conversation and countenances that his father-in-law and his brothers-in-law were dissatisfied with his dishonest conduct, (xxxi. 20,) determined to leave them secretly, with his family and property; and when he departed, his favorite wife, Rachel, stole her father's gods, and kept them so securely hid, that the old man, when he overtook Jacob, could not find his gods. And Laban was equally dishonest as Jacob and his wife, for he sold Rachel to Jacob, and then imposed her elder sister on him; and as Jacob wanted Rachel also, Laban charged him other seven years' labor for her. Jacob was so well convinced of his infamously base conduct towards his father and his twin brother, that, when he came near to their dwelling, he became afraid that Esau would retaliate on him some of his infamous conduct, which he had committed on them. (Gen. xxxii.) . He therefore sent forward large presents to Esau, accompanied by the most humiliating messages, to appease his brother's expected wrath, calling his brother lord, and himself the servant of his lord, Esau, with much

other hypocritical trash, clearly showing that there was neither honesty nor candor in the man.

Reuben committed fornication by lying with Bilhah, his father's concubine, the mother of his brothers Dan and Naphtali. (Gen. xxxv. 22.)

Jacob's sons, having imbibed the idea that their youngest brother, Joseph, was the favorite of their father, laid a scheme to destroy him; but accidentally meeting some foreigners who were willing to buy him, they sold him into a far country, (Gen. xxxvii.;) and to hide their treachery, persuaded their father that Joseph had been devoured by wild beasts.

"And the thing which he [Onan] did displeased the Lord; wherefore he slew him also." (Gen. xxxviii. 10.) Now the thing which Onan did, was, he would not get with child Tamar, the widow of his brother Er, whom that same Lord had previously murdered. But his father, Judah, was not conscientious, for he got Tamar with child, (Gen. xxxviii. 15,) not knowing that it was his daughter-in-law, but supposed her to be a harlot. Some time after, he being informed that his daughter-in-law was with child, he ordered her to be burned; and when she was brought out for that purpose, she sent for her father-in-law, and produced to him such clear proof that it was himself that had got her with child, that he rescinded his order.

Joseph, having been taken when he was young, about seventeen years old, into Egypt, where the people were highly civilized, and of course in some degree liberal and just, became a man of very superior principles, when compared with his clannish, lewd, and selfish progenitors and brethren. He took to himself an Egyptian wife, by whom he had two sons, (Gen. xii. 50;) and I have not found that

he was ever charged with bigamy, adultery, fornication, or incest, which were such common practices among the members of the clan from which he sprang. Joseph must have lived very happily in Egypt, for he declared that he had forgotten all his toils, and all his father's house.

Moses was raised and educated by and among the Egyptians, but early became acquainted with his origin. Yet he does not appear to have imbibed the low and lewd vices of the most of his progenitors; but judging from a review of his whole life, as given by himself, he was ambitious, ferocious, and tyrannical. If there be any truth in Moses's history of himself, it appears to me, if plainly told, to be about as follows: That after he committed the murder for which he had to leave Egypt, he went to Midian; and being a learned and an accomplished young man, was favorably received by Jethro, king and priest of Midian, and married one of his daughters. Rollin says, that God himself, when praising Moses, said that "he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." I have spoken of Moses as being a young man when he went to Midian. I am aware that the record says, "And Moses was fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh." (Ex. vii. 7.) But the record also says, "And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens; and he espied an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand." (Ex. ii. 11, 12.) From the account there given, it is evident that when Moses committed that murder he was a young man; for it seems to have been the first time that he had

been out among his brethren after he was grown; and the murder was known the next day after it was done, and he left Egypt. If we admit that he was then about thirty years old, he must have lived fifty years in Midian.

As before stated, Moses's father-in-law, Jethro, was priest and king of Midian; and Moses living so long with him, they certainly had ample time to mature a scheme for prompting of the Hebrews that were in Egypt to a revolt against the authorities of that country; and there can be but little doubt that Jethro was the principal architect in the building up of Moses's God; for it does not appear that Moses had any ideas respecting a God until after he had taken his abode in Midian, or that the Hebrews in Egypt had any, not even Aaron, the elder brother of Moses, who had been raised and educated among the Hebrews, until Moses took them the news that there was one. "And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him. And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. And Aaron spoke all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed. And when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped." (Ex. iv. 28.)

Of the ten commandments, as given in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, the first four are nothing more than theological requirements, and cannot be considered in any way to comport with any system of correct morals. Some part of them, being extremely unjust, are therefore immoral. The fifth, that is, "Honor thy father and thy mother," taken generally, is good; but I apprehend that there have been,

and now are, cases in which a virtuous and just person would find it almost impossible to comply with the command. The reason there given why the command ought to be complied with is an appeal to selfish fear, and has no morality in it. The last five commandments, as there given, are good moral precepts. But was Moses's God, Moses himself, those in command under him, or his successors in office, in any wise regulated by the last five commandments? I think that a candid examination of the acts of those persons most clearly shows that they paid no respect to them.

Moses's laws, or, more correctly speaking, the commands of Moses's God, as exhibited by Moses, for the government of his people, show a very low state of morals. Some few of them may perhaps be termed good; the greater part are very questionable, in either their necessity or their justice; and others of them are bad, because either unjust, or cruel, or both. Notwithstanding that Moses had, by his injustice, and his worse than savage cruelty, reduced his people to apparent subjection, yet he knew that their hatred towards him and his God was great, and he feared them; and as they yet had among them some few trinkets of gold and silver, it was necessary to rob them of these also, in order to reduce them to the greatest possible dependence on and subserviency to him and his supporters in tyranny and villany. To effect that robbery, there can be but little doubt, Moses's pretended journey and long stay in the mountain were planned, that the people might be stimulated to revolt, and ask for other gods; which request Aaron, notwithstanding he was high priest of Moses's God, readily assented to, and commanded them to bring unto him their earrings, and they did so, and he made them a God in the shape of a calf; but it is very questionable as to its being made of

gold, for Moses burned it, and strewed it upon the water, and made the people drink it. And when Joshua had finished their God he built an altar before it, and then made proclamation for a feast unto the Lord. But Moses, before he went up into the mountain, had taken care to strengthen his supporters, by taking into his employ Bezaleel, son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, the largest tribe among the Israelites; and also Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, the second largest tribe.* The taking of men of note out of these two large tribes into his favor no doubt added considerably to Moses's strength. He also associated Hur with Aaron in the governing of the people while he was gone. (Ex. xxiv. 14.)

That calf business gave Moses and Aaron a good opportunity to ascertain who among their subjects were most inclined to question their authority; for if Moses was actually upon the mountain all the time that he said he was, which is very questionable, Aaron was with the people, and knew all their movements; and he having so freely aided them in their revolt, it is likely that the principal leaders of the movement would express themselves freely in his presence. It therefore became easy for him and Moses to frame such orders governing the massacre which followed as would generally secure the destruction of the most active men concerned in the revolt.

"Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord's side? let them come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out

* The tribe of Joseph was divided into two tribes: Ephraim, 40,500; Manasseh, 32,200: 72,700.

from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses; and there fell of the people about three thousand men." (Ex. xxii. 26–28.)

The camp consisted of about six hundred thousand men fit for war, exclusive of the Levites, who were a privileged order, and, in this case, commanded to murder the offenders, and, from the orders given them, to go from gate to gate throughout the camp; and from the number slain, three thousand out of six hundred thousand, it is reasonable to conclude that they had private orders designating persons that were to be murdered. The record does not inform us how many women and children were murdered on that occasion; but as the whole family of the offender was generally included in the slaughters inflicted for offences committed against Moses or his God, we may reasonably conclude it was in that case. If so, allowing the women and children to be only twice the number of the men fit for war, there must have been six thousand women and children slaughtered, making the whole number murdered nine thousand. And for what was that infamous slaughter of men, women, and children perpetrated? The record shows that it was done to enable the Levites — the clergy tribe — to render themselves worthy to receive a blessing from Moses's unjust, tyrannical, and savage God. The next day after that infamous butchering of the people, that hypocritical scoundrel Moses said unto the people, "Ye have sinned a great sin, and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for you."

After the great slaughter portrayed in the twentieth chapter of Judges, the whole tribe of Benjamin having been inhumanly murdered, except six hundred men who

fled and took refuge in a rock, the people became much grieved at what they considered the extinction of one of their tribes. They said they had sworn not to give any of their daughters as wife to any Benjamite; so that, notwithstanding there were six hundred men of that tribe yet living, there appeared no way of renewing the tribe. But the leaders, as the leaders in rascality always are, were fertile in expedients, and pretended to have discovered that there were none of the camp from Jabesh-gilead to the assembly at Mizpeh. Now, the record, I think, shows that charge to be an afterthought — a mere pretence; for at the commencement of the preparation for the expedition against Benjamin they said, —

"Then all the children of Israel went out, and the congregation was gathered together as one man, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, with the land of Gilead, unto the Lord in Mizpeh." (Judges xx. 1.) And again, they declared, "So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, knit together as one man." (Judges xx. 11.)

But if we allow that that charge was actually true, what was the charge? It was, that a small proportion of the men of Israel did not join the rest and assist them to inhumanly murder more than one hundred and forty thousand men, women, and children of their own people; and upon that charge an expedition was sent against Jabesh-gilead with orders to slay every man, woman, and child of that place, except the marriageable virgins, of which they found four hundred, which were brought in and given to the Benjamites for wives. Yet there were two hundred Benjamites without wives. To furnish wives for that two hundred, and yet save their own oaths, the leaders had to fall on some expedient. There was to be a great feast at Shiloh; and they told the two hundred Benjamites to go and secrete them-

selves round about the place, and when opportunity offered for each of them to steal a girl and take her off to his home.

"And it shall be, when their fathers come unto us to complain, that we will say unto them, Be favorable unto them for our sakes, because we reserved not each man his wife in the war; for ye did not give unto them at this time, that ye should be guilty. And the children of Benjamin did so, and took them wives according to their number." (Judges xxi. 22, 23.)

Now, let us pause and reflect what must have been the state of morals among a people who could act as here stated, and what kind of a God was he whom they worshipped, who, according to their accounts, governed them, and not only sanctioned their proceedings, but commanded many of the worst acts to be done. They first inhumanly murder more than one hundred and forty thousand men, women, and children of their own people, to gratify the revengeful disposition of one very bad man, and to avenge the death of equally as bad a woman. And when they in some measure saw the enormity of their conduct, and desired to compensate in a small degree the party injured, there was an oath in the way. They had sworn that they would not any of them give his daughter to a Benjamite for wife; so they murdered, at the lowest calculation, over twenty thousand more men, women, and children of their own people, and forced four hundred virgins into the arms of men that they may have despised; and then by another stratagem, not quite so inhuman, but equally treacherous, they enabled two hundred other men to steal each a wife; so there were six hundred women forced into the arms of men without having been the least consulted as to their willingness or not. And by that base and treacherous conduct those

leaders of the people seem to have believed that they saved their oaths inviolate. Let us see. You and me each swear that we will not give any of our property towards the promotion of a certain object named; but after cool reflection we desire that that object should be accomplished, but it cannot, or will not, without a part of one of our properties is appropriated therefor. What is to be done? Each of us has sworn that we will not so give any of our property. Why, according to the foregoing example, if either of us can, by murder or treachery, or by both murder and treachery, get possession of the other's property, he may give that property; because it is not the property of him who gives it, and he whose property it is did not give it; thereby saving both our oaths. O, miserable, miserable subterfuge!

"And it came to pass as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died." (Joshua x. 11.) Would an infinitely wise, infinitely powerful, and infinitely good God, if there be such a being, so employ himself? No. It was Moses's God that did that.

"And it came to pass that night that the angel of the Lord went out and smote the camp of the Assyrians, a hundred fourscore and five thousand; and when they arose early in the morning, behold they were all dead corpses." (2 Kings xix. 35.) That is certainly a very large Irish bull.

"And Moses was wroth with the officers of the host, with the captains over thousands, and the captains over hundreds, which came from the battle. And Moses said unto them, —

"Have you saved all the women alive? Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman

that hath known a man by lying with him. But all the women-children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves." (Numbers xxxi. 14–18.)

The number of young virgins that were kept alive was thirty two thousand. And notwithstanding Moses told the captains over thousands, and the captains over hundreds, to keep them alive for themselves, he had them divided in the same proportion as the rest of the plunder. And the Lord's tribute was six hundred and threescore and fifteen sheep, and threescore and twelve beeves, and threescore and one asses, and thirty-two young virgins: the Lord's share was given to Aaron, the high priest, for the use of himself and clergy. These are some, out of a great many of the same kind, of the morals of that "Holy Bible," to which we are, by the clergy, continually referred as the great work by which our lives should be regulated, and which is, by the influence of the clergy, forced into our schools, to be read and committed to memory by the children, who are by the obscenity and wickedness contained in that book rendered vicious, unjust, and immoral, and we need not expect, while society is thus influenced, many to be honest, much less moral.

There have been persons in every age that considered a clergy the upas tree of society, poisonous to every virtue; but whoever, some years back, were so incautious as to express their opinion, were rewarded with the rack, the gibbet, the stake, or the block. But for some few years past, (thanks to the American constitution, the work of infidels, for its benevolent influence is felt throughout the world,) these inhuman punishments for such an offence have been partially dispensed with, and those who have recently been candid enough to express their opinion concerning the

injurious effect of clerical influence on society, have been paid in misrepresentations and downright lies. But hypocrisy, sooner or later, will dig its own grave, as appears from the following extract. The New York Independent (a Congregational paper) holds the following strong language upon the scepticism of the day: —

"Among all the earnest-minded young men who are at this moment leading in thought and action in America, we venture to say, that four fifths are sceptical even of the great historical facts of Christianity. What is told of Christian doctrine by the churches is not considered by them. And furthermore, there is among them a general ill-concealed distrust of the clerical body as a class, and an utter disgust with the very aspect of modern Christianity and church worship. This scepticism is not flippant; little is said about it. It is not a peculiarity alone of the radicals and fanatics; many of them are men of calm and even balance of mind, and belong to no class of ultraists. It is not worldly and selfish. The doubters lead in the most self-denying enterprises of the day." — *Semi-Weekly Ohio Statesman*, Sept. 30, 1853.

CHAPTER XXV.

MORALITY OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE ANCIENT PHILOSOPHERS.

Jesus Christ, according to his historians, — for he gave no record of himself, — has given but few moral precepts, but a great many religious requirements; generally attaching to each a great reward or a severe punishment. The moral precepts advanced by him cannot be justly claimed as originating with him, for they were all given to the world hundreds of years before he was born. Some few are good, therefore correct; others are correct under certain circumstances; some are not correct under any circumstances. I believe it is generally acknowledged that the best moral precept contained in either the Old or the New Testament, and perhaps as correct a one as can be found any where, is said to have been delivered to the people by Jesus Christ, in his sermon on the mount, as follows: "Therefore all things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." (Matt. vii. 12.) Jesus did not give this precept as any thing new, but declared it to be in accordance with the law and the prophets. The Israelites had a school called the School of the Prophets, in which young men were educated and qualified for public teachers; and it is quite reasonable to suppose that some of those teachers had propagated a precept so congenial with justice, benevolence, and good sense, and there might have been something in the Hebrew law looking to the same subject.

Isocrates, a Greek orator, who died about three hundred and thirty-eight years before Jesus Christ was born, at the great age of ninety-eight years, in treating of morals, said, "We do not attempt to set forth novel discoveries, for the subject can only suggest simple and common truths, drawn from the ordinary conduct of life. The merit of a moral treatise consists in collecting, as extensively as possible, the maxims scattered amongst all nations, and placing them in an interesting point of view. Let us not suppose that the care and study so serviceable in other respects are of no avail in rendering ourselves wiser and better. Man would be too miserable, if, after attaining the skill to tame and train the most ferocious animals, he could not aspire to improving himself in knowledge and virtue. Our youths should not only be excited to virtue by advice and precepts, but we should convince them, by our example, of the neces sity for their becoming good citizens. We can neither form our judgment correctly, nor deliberate fairly, if we do not consult different opinions, and divest ourselves of every kind of awe and prejudice in considering them."

Confucius, a Chinese philosopher, the greatest and best of great and good men, who died in the seventy-third year of his age, about four hundred and seventy-eight years before Jesus Christ was born, said, —

"We cannot observe the necessary rules of life, if there be wanting these three virtues: considerateness, which enables us to distinguish good from evil; universal benevolence, which inclines us to love all men that are virtuous; and resolution, constantly to persevere in our adherence to good and avoidance of evil. Sincerity of heart is the first of virtues; nothing is so indispensable in the commerce of society as sincerity. We should behave ourselves at all times towards others the same as we would wish their con-

duct to be towards ourselves. He who sincerely and truly measures others by himself, obeys that law naturally implanted in his bosom, which dictates to him not to do to others what he would not they should do to him; and whatsoever things he would that men should do to him, to do even the same to them. Let us use the same standard in judging ourselves as that by which we judge others, and estimate their sufferings and enjoyments according to our own; so shall we fulfil the laws of true charity."

Aristotle, a very celebrated philosopher, born at Stagira, a small city in Macedon, died in the sixty-third year of his age, about three hundred and twenty-one years before the birth of Jesus Christ, among many other excellent remarks on morals, said, —

"Virtue consists not so much in just perceptions as in correct habits, which require great length of time and much attention to form. Practical virtue is acquired by exercise and confirmed by reason. A virtuous life is in itself a source of delight. Vice is sufficient of itself to make a man thoroughly unhappy. Vice tends to create misery, though he who allows himself in its practice be surrounded with all worldly advantages. Justice is the virtue of rendering every man his due. We should conduct ourselves towards others as we would expect them to act towards ourselves."

Socrates was born about four hundred and sixty-seven years before Jesus Christ, at Attica. This celebrated philosopher says, —

"Our duty is, to be most rational and useful, because that which wants reason also wants respect: we have no concern with any thing that is beyond comprehension. He who is attached to justice is estimable; and he who separates the just from the useful is detestable. Where aris-

tocracy prevails, those called the lower classes only breathe for the service and profit of those who arrogantly distinguish themselves as the higher classes, or the great. He who has practised virtue in such a manner as to have committed no crime, has the testimony of a good conscience, and consequently enjoys perfect tranquillity. Having searched into all kinds of science, we discover the folly of neglecting those things which concern human life, and involving ourselves in difficulties about questions that are but mere notions; we should confine ourselves to nature and reason. Fancies beyond the reach of the understanding, and which have yet been made objects of belief, — these have been the source of all the disputes, errors, and superstitions that have prevailed in the world. Such notional mysteries cannot be made subservient to the right uses of humanity. Superstition is obedient to pride, its parent. The way of gaining admission into the temple of science, is through the portal of doubt. We mistake in seeking happiness from sensual indulgence, which is too worthless and fleeting to procure permanent felicity. Virtue and wisdom is the beauty of the mind, and vice its deformity. In childhood, we should be modest; in youth, temperate; in manhood, just; and in old age, wise."

This great and good man was, by the instigation of the clergy, put to death. The indictment on which Socrates was tried charged him with three distinct offences: not believing in the gods which the state believed in; introducing new divinities; and corrupting the young. When he was condemned, his execution was postponed about thirty days; during this interval, some of his wealthy friends pressed him to take advantage of the means of escape which they could easily have procured for him. But he refused to prolong a life which was so near its nat-

ural close — for he was little less than seventy years old — by a breach of the laws, which he had never violated, and in defence of which he had before braved death; and his attachment to Athens was so strong, that life had no charms for him in a foreign land. When the summons for his death came, he drank the fatal cup of hemlock in the midst of his weeping friends, with as much composure as the last draught of a long and cheerful banquet. At that time, Plato was a disciple of Socrates, and there can be no doubt but the fate of his master determined him not to incur the displeasure of the clergy. It appears that in every age the most moral and best men have been the particular objects of persecution by the clergy. Socrates and Jesus Christ are two prominent cases.

Marcus Tullius Cicero, one of the greatest men of antiquity, whether we consider him as an orator, a statesman, or a philosopher, was born at Arpinum, about one hundred and seven years before Jesus Christ. From a great number of virtuous moral precepts, correct political positions, and truly philosophical maxims advanced by him, I select the following: —

"We should always act in a way so as to be able to render satisfactory reasons for our conduct; this rule defines almost the extent of our duties. The obligation which is most binding on society is, the firm conviction that one man ought not to injure the person of another man, nor appropriate to himself another's property; that a greater outrage upon humanity cannot be committed. No man ought to take advantage of another's simplicity to give aught thereby to himself. In the sale of an article, every particular should be fairly stated, that the purchaser may not be ignorant of any of its qualities known to the seller."

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. xxii. 39)

is a command said to be given by Jesus Christ. "Love your neighbor as yourself" is a moral precept, said, by the Rev. Thomas Robbins, in speaking of the Chinese religion, to have been advanced by the Chinese philosopher Confucius. It is very certain that Confucius did not receive his precept from Jesus, as the former died nearly five hundred years before the latter was born; but Jesus might, and probably did, receive his command indirectly from Confucius. Be that as it may, the correctness of the principle involved therein, whether it be considered as a command or as a moral precept, depends on the relative usefulness and intrinsic value of the parties to the community in which they live, or, more properly, to mankind. If your neighbor be vicious, and of course injurious to society, you ought not, you cannot love him, unless you be like unto him. A virtuous person will love the virtuous and hate the vicious, no matter who commands or recommends otherwise; for we have no more the control of our love or hatred than we have of the growth of our bodies. External circumstances govern each, and they are formed in accordance with those circumstances. Though we do not love our neighbor, — no, if we even hate him, — that will not justify us in treating him with any unnecessary severity, or in doing him any injustice whatever; and our duty to society, to that neighbor, and to ourself, requires that we should keep a vigilant care over that neighbor, and if we discover any probability that by kind treatment, or any other proper course, he may be reformed, it then becomes our duty so to conduct towards him as we think will be most likely to make him a good member of society, beneficial to himself and family, if he has any, and useful to his neighbors. All that is here said about neighbors applies with equal force to those who are not our neighbors. There is no merit or demerit in

being our neighbor; it therefore cannot give any claim to, or be a bar against, any particular privilege.

"I say unto you, Swear not at all; but let your communications be yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." (Matt. v. 34.) This is a most excellent moral precept, or perhaps, in the way it was given, may be said to be a command, said to have been given by Jesus Christ. Yet, if any attempt is made, in any country or state in what is called Christendom, to carry this excellent precept into practice, by abolishing by law the use of oaths in all cases, Bible moralists, particularly the clergy, almost universally oppose it most strenuously.

A good writer on morals says, —

"He who, for want of equity and uprightness, does not scruple to betray truth, will no less betray it after an oath than if he had not sworn at all. There is something not only ridiculous, but insulting, in forcing an honorable man to stand up before his equals, who know him, or at least can ascertain him to be a man of worth and veracity, there to *uncover his head*, hold up his *right hand*, and utter conditional imprecations on himself, before credence can possibly be attached to a sixpenny disclosure, when, on all ordinary occasions, his simple word would be taken for thousands; and there is something preposterous in the expectation of dragging truth from a notorious liar, through the mere dread of retribution in a life beyond the present. 'Tis priestly trick all."

I do not recollect that I ever knew a clergyman to be in favor of abolishing the laws which make oaths necessary. And why are they not? Because it is evident that oaths nourish superstition among the people; and the more superstition the people have, the greater will be their desire for a clergy, and the better will be the clergy's pay.

And in all this swearing of witnesses what constitutes the competency of a witness? Is it honesty, a just, virtuous, and upright conduct, or the acting generally on correct moral principles? No, no, none, nor all of these will qualify a person to testify in some courts, falsely called courts of justice; but to be so qualified it is only necessary to believe, or to pretend to believe, in a certain creed of religion. I say pretend to believe, for I think it may be asserted, without any fear or hope that the contrary can be shown, that it is utterly impossible for any court or individual to know, by any process whatever, what any witness or other individual believes.

As an illustration of the mode of ascertaining the competency of a witness by some of our courts, I will cite the proceedings on that subject in a case before the Municipal Court, in Boston, in the year 1823. The lawyer for the prisoner having been informed that the witness about to be sworn did not believe in the existence of a God, objected to his being sworn *in chief*. The witness is sworn to make true answers. The judge to witness. "Do you believe in the existence of a God?" Answer. "How can I believe, if I do not know?" Judge. "Do you feel under a religious obligation to speak the truth?" Answer. "I feel obliged to speak the truth." Judge. "Do you feel under obligation to Almighty God to speak the truth?" Answer. "How can I feel an obligation to one whom I do not know to exist?" The witness was set aside by the judge as not competent to be sworn.

Now, what are the real ideas here held out to the witness by the court? They are as follows: Sir, it is strongly suspected by some one of this court, that you will not lie; and it becomes my duty, as judge, to endeavor to ascertain the truth or falsehood of that suspicion. Here let me premise

that if you are so conscientiously obstinate, that you will not tell even a pious lie, your testimony cannot be received in this court; but if you will condescend to tell a pious lie, and swear to it, then your testimony will be received. To such tampering with justice, veracity, and every correct moral principle, may justly be attributed the greater part of the perjuries, and nearly all the common lying and insincere conduct, now committed in what is called civilized society. The tyranny of rulers and the avarice and deception of priests made mankind immoral, and keeps them so.

The biographers of Jesus Christ have been so anxious to make him appear very powerful, that they have related many things of him which would, if we believed them, divest us of our good opinion of his moral worth and benevolent intentions. Among a great many marvellous things reported of him, it is said, that two persons who were possessed of devils met Jesus; and that some distance off there was a herd of many swine feeding.

"So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the swine; and behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters." (Matt. viii. 31, 32.) This act, as recorded of Jesus, shows that he was mild and friendly to the devils; but to the poor hogs, who were quietly feeding, it was cruel in the extreme to send a parcel of devils into them; and to the owners of the hogs, unjust and injurious, therefore immoral. This wicked and foolish story, I suppose, has been the cause of hogs being considered filthy animals. The chicken, which we consider so very clean, will eat any thing that a hog will; and the horse, which we consider so noble

an animal, is fond of eating dirt, and of rolling therein. It has also, I suppose, been the cause of millions of the human family debarring themselves the use of hog's flesh as food. As I do not believe that Jesus was ever guilty of any such conduct, I shall copy here no more of the sketches of his biographers.

The celebrated philosopher Cicero said, —

"The knowledge of truth is a man's highest attainment, and the object most worthy of man's researches. Those who seek this knowledge are termed philosophers; and philosophy consists in the love of truth. To investigate and prove the truth, seems to be the province of man. Have we discharged the office of judging for ourselves? Are we freed from the ascendency of those impressions which had been forced upon us, and do we no longer think it incumbent to defend our erroneous prepossessions? This is to be truly free. But most men have been drilled into a habit of belief before they were able to exercise their reason in judging of truth. We have been insensibly trained in depravity; we have been so far involved in error as to separate the idea of goodness from that of utility, and the idea of truth from that of reality; so far have we been led to deviate from reason as to believe in a goodness different from moral propriety, and hold the faith that there is a truth more to be regarded than natural fact. Never could men conceive opinions at the same time so false and pernicious, so fatal to good sense and right motives of conduct. Reason and truth should be more regarded by us than opinion. He is sufficiently enlightened who knows how to act rightly, and who has the power to refrain from evil. Injustice committed either by violence or deception is alike unworthy of man; but fraud seems to be the more odious means of the two."

That wisest and best of men, Confucius, said, —

"The sovereign good consists in an entire conformity with correct reason, both in our opinions and in our propensities. We should let our reason, and not our passions, be the rule of our conduct; for reason will lead us to think correctly, to speak sensibly, and to act justly. Correctness of judgment determines us towards truth, and inclines us to yield to whatever is consistent with reason. Those who prize truth and constantly make it their object of pursuit, who seek to discover their errors and are bent on correcting them, are rightly called philosophers. Those pretended sages, whose vanity leads them to affect a knowledge of what is beyond comprehension, adopt a part in which they are sure to miscarry."

Democritus, one of the greatest philosphers of antiquity, was born at Abdera, a town of Thrace, about four hundred and ninety years, according to Anthon, — others say, four hundred and sixty, or four hundred and seventy years, — before Jesus Christ. It has been said that he laughed at human life in general, which appears to be a better course than that taken by Heraclitus, who is said to have wept continually over it; for it is certainly more agreeable, as well as more conducive to health, to laugh than to weep, especially as a great part of the evils we endure are brought on us by our own bad conduct, folly, and vanity. Democritus said, "The end of all our moral attainments is tranquillity of mind. Tranquillity or peace of mind, which is also called wisdom, is a thing so desirable, that its value is beyond all estimate: possessing it, we wonder at nothing; we fear nothing; and we enjoy every thing; for, when we know how properly to frame our manners, order our actions, and moderate our desires, we are continually happy."

Diogenes was born about four hundred and thirteen years before Jesus Christ, at Sinope, a city of Pontus, and died at Corinth, aged about ninety years. Some of his maxims: —

"The end of life is a just use of our reason in the perception of natural ideas, and in rejecting unnatural notions. The end of philosophy is to subdue the passions, and qualify us for every condition of life: no event can happen for which the philosopher is not prepared. Liberty is the greatest good, and the foundation of all the rest." To one who reviled him he said, "No one will believe you when you speak ill of me, any more than they would believe me if I were to speak well of you."

He said, when he looked upon seamen, men of physical science, and philosophers, that man was the wisest of all beings; but when he looked upon priests, prophets, and interpreters of dreams, that nothing was so contemptible as man. He was taken by pirates and carried to Crete, where he was exposed to sale in the public market. When the auctioneer asked him what he could do, he said, "I can govern men; therefore sell me to one who wants a master." Xeniades, a wealthy Corinthian, happening at that instant to pass by, was struck with the singularity of his reply, and purchased him. On their arrival at Corinth, Xeniades gave him his freedom, and committed to him the education of his children, and the direction of his domestic concerns.

Epicurus, Lempriere says, the greatest philosopher of his age, was born at Gargettus, in Attica, about three hundred and forty years before Jesus Christ. Some of the many excellent maxims attributed by different writers to Epicurus: —

"Philosophy is the right exercise of reason, in the pursuit and attainment of a happy life. A happy life consists

in tranquillity of mind and health of body. To correct the disorders of the mind, no one is either too young or too old; and he who pretends that the time for reflection is not yet come, or is past, is as he who says that the time to live well and happy either is not yet come, or is quite gone. It is not in poetic fiction, but in the great expanse of nature, lying open to observation, that the proper field exists for making our researches after truth. A man of sense will not allow himself to be beguiled by the sophistries of oratory; and as he exacts no more from grammar than congruity, so neither will he require more from rhetoric than perspicuity; but he will confine himself to the use of a plain and familiar style. The acquisition of knowledge is so solid a good in itself, that it can never be lost. As nothing ought to be deemed more valuable than truth, we should proceed towards its discovery by the most direct and natural means, neither devising any fictions ourselves, nor suffering ourselves to be imposed upon by poets, priests, or logicians. The scholar profanes the honor of his profession when he abandons truth and entertains notions that are fabulous, or mounts up into the supernatural; for, as philosophy is nothing else than a due inquiry into nature, fiction can only prove an obstacle to the attainment of a true insight into facts. Truth is that which exists in the nature of things; it is that very thing which is, and no other. I am ashamed of human imbecility, when it fetcheth divination even out of dreams; as if an imp-god, if such can be fancied, hopping from bed to bed, did admonish snoring persons, by whispering to them visions of what would happen to them shortly. As to prophecies and miracles, it may be evinced, every way, that all such lies are the mere preached imposture of priests. Morals comprise the whole range of human conduct; the practice of justice forms the most weighty

obligation of man towards man, and justice consists in committing no injury against the person, property, or character of another. The highest intellectual acquirements consist in the sagacious, assiduous, courageous exercise of our reason, or intelligent faculties, by which we attain a knowledge of the actual condition of our physical being, and the correct sense of properly or happily conducting ourselves through life. Every animal, as soon as born, naturally seeks enjoyment, and esteems it as the chief good, and each also regards pain as the greatest evil, and to its utmost ability shuns it. The object of life, by the tacit consent of all men, is felicity; and since almost all miss that end, must it not be the fact, that they use not the right means to attain it? Supreme enjoyment exists in morals, and in freedom of life, when it is consistent with the dictates of reason. Temperance, or the regulation of our desires and passions, enables us to enjoy pleasure, without suffering any consequent inconvenience. When we say that pleasure is the sovereign good — enjoyment the chief end of life — we are far from meaning the pleasures, or rather the indulgences of voluptuousness, or that which consists in gross, excessive, and pernicious gratifications, as some have ignorantly or maliciously represented; for it is not riot and dissipation, nor the other consuming excitements of the senses, which render life pleasant; but it is the sober exercise of reason, which inquires into the nature of those things which are to be desired or avoided, and banishes ignorance, doubt, and fear. It cannot be expressed how great unhappiness mankind have drawn upon themselves by imagining such phantoms as gods, and attributing to them wrath and severity; by reason whereof men's minds being dejected, every one trembles when any phenomena happens which he thinks indicates the anger of his God, and his intention to punish or awe him, poor miserable man."

Epicurus, in speaking of Plato, said, —

"With what eyes could Plato look upon the infinite world, and conceive it comprehended — finite — made and built by a fancied comprehender or God? What materials, what diagrams, what engines, what assistants in the interminable job? How reach infinity? — infinity with which the vastest extent comprehended by the imagination cannot compare in ratio. But what is most remarkable, he gives us a world created, or having a beginning in time, and yet affirms it to be eternal. Can we admit him to have had the right use of his reason, who was capable of thinking a thing to be everlasting, and yet to have had a commencement?"

Heraclitus, a celebrated Ephesian philosopher, who flourished about five hundred years before Jesus Christ, said, —

"From nothing nothing can be derived. The world is the infinite material existence, which was neither made by gods nor men, but necessarily always was and will be. The individual bodies which compose the world, in their respective durations, and which connect the eternal series of their several kinds, have both beginning and end. In the action of the universe, or infinite medium of existence, there is no such thing as stop or rest. Nothing in nature perishes, nor is there any thing new ever produced; but all the phenomena of formation and dissolution are merely changes in the forms of bodies. The faculty of reason, exercised on the perception of that which is around us, is the judge of truth. The end of life is to render it happy while it endures. Contentment is the sovereign good. The greatest triumph is to obtain the mastery of ourselves." Deriding the sacrifices by which it was believed the gods were appeased, he said, "These devotees think themselves cleansed by polluting themselves with blood — as if a man should wallow in filth, as a means of purification."

Titus Carus Lucretius, a Roman philosopher and poet, was born about ninety-six years before Jesus Christ. His poem has been translated into English. He says, —

"In the slow lapse of time even the aspect of the world changes; not any thing remains perpetually the same. All that our senses behold — the sky, the earth, and the sea — all is as nothing, if we attempt to compare it with the boundless immensity — the infinity. All ideas of reality or truth are derived from the senses. Do we not see that all which nature requires is a body exempt from pain, and a sane mind — a mind freed from terrors and anxieties? If our minds are not well regulated, to what trouble and what perils are we not exposed in spite of ourselves? Licentiousness is a source from which flows so bitter a stream that it destroys the flowers of pleasure."

In his poem, Lucretius not only controverts all the popular notions of heathenism, but even that point which is fundamental in every system of religious faith — the existence of a great first cause.

Phocylides, a Greek poet of Miletus, lived about five hundred and forty years before Jesus Christ. Among a great many other things, he said, —

"Be not troubled about past evils; it is impossible that what has already happened should be recalled. Eat, drink, sleep, and talk with restriction; practise moderation in all things; in every thing avoid excess. In all thou sayest, adhere to truth; permit not thy mouth in lying; have not one statement in thy heart, and another on thy lips. Respect chastity; never betray thy trust; regard the purity of tender maids; do not even take them rudely by the hand. Such are the laws of morality. Conform thy conduct thereto, and happiness will attend thee even to the close of life."

The philosopher Plato died at Athens about three hundred and forty-eight years before the birth of Jesus Christ, at the age of eighty-one years. His writings were numerous; and among the great many things which he said, (some very good, and some not so good, and some very questionable,) are the following, which I think are good: —

"Nothing is more pleasing to a sound mind than to speak and hear truth. Happy is he who, even in his latter days, is able to perceive truth and arrive at wisdom. The natural world is infinite and eternal; the universe was not called into being from nonentity: from nothing nothing can proceed. The proper science of man, or morals, consists in knowing how to think and live according to nature. Good impressions are means which may lead to virtue; good in practice is virtue; and this is the perfection of nature, and the most excellent of all advantages; for in it consists the happiness of life. Knowledge without virtue ought to be deemed cunning, rather than wisdom. As injustice generally prevails in trade, it ought to be impressed upon the feelings of every merchant, that it is improper to ask two prices, or to commend falsely that which is exposed for sale. We should so live, that none will believe those who speak ill of us." Some one remarked that he seemed as desirous to learn himself as to teach others, and asked him how long he intended to remain a pupil. He replied, "As long as I shall not be ashamed to improve in wisdom and goodness."

Pythagoras, one of the greatest philosophers of antiquity, was born at Samos about five hundred and ninety years before Jesus Christ, and died aged about ninety-three years. His Golden Verses have been published. The following are some, among many, of his moral and philosophical maxims: —

"Mankind have ever lived, and the genus man never had a beginning. Death is the destiny of all men. It is the province of science to be conversant with those objects that are immutable and eternal in their nature, and which, therefore, can alone properly be said to exist. The end of philosophy is to free the mind from those impediments which hinder its progress in attaining the knowledge of nature, and to raise it to the contemplation of immutable truth. The most important branch of instruction is to inform the mind concerning good and evil. Let uprightness influence you in all your actions, and be sincere in whatever you say; let reason be your guide even in the smallest matters."

A few of the moral precepts and maxims of the seven wise men of Greece:—

1st. Thales, the chief of the seven sages of Greece, was born at Miletus, about six hundred and forty years before Jesus Christ, and died at the advanced age of ninety-five years.

"Necessity is all-powerful — space infinite. Pleasure of body consists in health, and felicity of mind in knowledge. Health, competency, and intelligence form the chief sources of happiness. Indolence is irksome, intemperance injurious, and ignorance intolerable. Happy is the family that abounds not in too great affluence, and that is sufficiently removed from the reach of poverty. In order to live justly and be respected, we must abstain from doing that we blame in others: whatever we know to be right, that we should do. The most difficult thing is to know ourselves; the easiest, to give advice. It will help us to bear our own ill fortune, if we reflect on the greater misfortunes of others. Take pains to correct the blemishes of the mind rather than those of the face. That commonwealth is best circumstanced in which the citizens are neither excessively rich

nor exceedingly poor. Monarchy, in every shape, is but tyranny."

2d. Solon, one of the seven sages of Greece, born at Athens, about five hundred and fifty-eight years before Jesus Christ. He distinguished himself early by his great courage and bright parts, which raised him to the government of his country. He died at the age of about eighty years.

"Know thyself. As long as thou shalt live, seek to improve thyself; presume not that old age brings with it wisdom: it is better to learn late than never. Make reason your guide; give to serious subjects their due consideration. In every thing you do, consider the end. Voluptuous indulgences only occasion pain, and they ought to be avoided." To one who excused himself for lying in jest he replied, "These jests will become serious falsehoods: what shall circumscribe our tongue if we pass the limits of truth?"

3d. Chilo, one of the seven wise men of Greece, died about five hundred and ninety-seven years before the time of Jesus Christ.

"To be provident for the future, and to be guided by reason, is the virtue of man. Death itself is less horrible than the phantom in whose shape our fancy is accustomed to regard it. Do not desire impossibilities. No acquirement is more difficult than self-knowledge. Self-love always exaggerates our merits in our own estimation. Honest loss is preferable to dishonest gain; for by the one a man suffers but once; by the other his suffering is lasting."

4th. Pittacus, one of the wise men of Greece, born about six hundred and fifty years before Jesus Christ, was a native of Mitylene, and died at about the age of seventy-one years.

"The first office of prudence is to foresee impending

evils, and prevent them. The gods themselves, if gods there were, must be subject to necessity. Whatever you do, do it well. Do not that to your neighbor which you would take ill from him. Power discovers a man. It is against nature to love an enemy. Addict thyself to sobriety. An equal marriage is best. I am pleased with the abode which exhibits nothing superfluous, and where I find every thing that is necessary."

5th. Bias, one of the seven wise men of Greece, was born at Priene, a town in Caria, about five hundred and seventy years before Jesus Christ. Though born to great wealth, he lived without splendor, expending his fortune in relieving the needy. On one occasion, certain pirates brought several young women to sell as slaves at Priene. Bias purchased them, and maintained them until he had an opportunity to return them to their friends. This generous action caused him to be styled "the prince of wise men."

"A good conscience only is superior to fear. We should so live as though our life might be long or short. It is a proof of a weak and uninformed mind to desire immortality; which is morally impossible. Those who busy themselves in acquiring vain knowledge, resemble owls, which see only in the night, but the light blinds them."

6th. Cleobulus, one of the seven wise men of Greece, died about five hundred and sixty years before the birth of Jesus Christ, was a native of Lindus, in the Island of Rhodes, son of Evagoras, monarch of that city, and claiming descent from Hercules, he ascended the throne on the death of his father.

"Avoid excess. Be acquainted with virtue, but a stranger to vice. Knowledge is preferable to ignorance. Be moderate in your pleasures. If rich, be not exalted; if

poor, be not dejected; hold injustice in horror; bridle thy tongue; do nothing with violence; compose quarrels; instruct thy children. Such is the character of virtue."

7th. Periander, son of Cypselus, tyrant of Corinth, he succeeded his father in the sovereign power. He has been considered, though rejected by some, as one of the seven sages of Greece. He died about five hundred and eighty-eight years before the birth of Jesus Christ.

"Industry overcomes almost every obstacle. Prudence can accomplish much. Repose is agreeable, temerity is dangerous, avarice base. Sensuality supplies but a momentary enjoyment; the pleasures of virtue are durable. In prosperity be moderate, in adversity prudent. Disgrace not your parents. Be not content with reproving those who commit faults; restrain those who are about to commit them. Be the same towards your friends, whether they be fortunate or unfortunate."

Sophists, the name given (so says Noah Webster) to a class of men who taught eloquence, philosophy, and politics, in ancient Greece, and who, by their vain subtilties and false axioms, drew upon themselves general hatred and contempt. Sophistry signifies (so Noah Webster says) fallacious reasoning; reasoning sound in appearance only. *Sophomore.* This word, says Mr. Goodrich, has generally been considered as an American barbarism, but was probably introduced into our country, at an early period, from the University of Cambridge, England. Among the cant terms of that university, we find Soph-Mor, as "the next distinctive appellation to Fresh-man." The younger sophs at Cambridge appear formally to have received the adjunct *mor* to their name, either as one which they courted, or as one given them in sport, for the supposed exhibition of inflated feeling in entering on their new honors. The term

thus applied seems to have passed at a very early period from Cambridge in England to Cambridge in America, as "the next distinctive appellation to freshman," and thus to have been attached to the second of the four classes in our American colleges; while it has now almost ceased to be known, even as a cant word, at the parent institution in England, from whence it came. It is said that a writer in the Gentleman's Magazine thinks that *mor* was introduced at a time when the Praise of Folly, by Erasmus, was so generally in use.

I have repeatedly stated, that my leading object is, to get people to examine, to think for themselves; not to allow, much less to hire, others to think for them. With that view I introduced the foregoing three words, sophists, sophistry, sophomore, and their meanings, or supposed meanings, that it may be seen, by proper examination, whether those words and their said meanings, when they are applied to persons and things as they generally are applied to, do correctly represent such persons and things to the mind of those to whom they are presented; and if not, whether it is not better, when we are learning, to learn things principally, and words so far as will express and explain such things, than to learn to string together many fine words, which do not convey to the mind a distinct idea of any thing.

The following are precepts of the seven sophists, collected by Sociades: —

1. Understand what thou learnest.
2. Comprehend what thou hearest.
3. Wishing to marry, avail thyself of opportunity.
4. Command thyself.
5. Relieve the wants of your friends.
6. Apply thyself to discipline.
7. Emulate the wise.

8. Disparage none.
9. Do what is just.
10. Husband thy time.
11. Shun deceit.
12. Determine quickly.
13. Abstain from bloodshed.
14. Defer not to give what thou intendest.
15. Envy none; eschew calumny.
16. Be on your guard.
17. Enjoy what thou possessest.
18. Be modest in thy deportment.
19. Return benefits.
20. Hearing, understand.
21. Aim only at knowledge that may be acquired.
22. Give no occasion for reproach.
23. Curb thy tongue.
24. Repel attempts to be injurious.
25. Decide not rashly.
26. Wait and see the end.
27. Converse mildly.
28. Be civil to all.
29. Do that whereof thou shalt not repent.
30. Counsel profitably.
31. Accomplish quickly.
32. Preserve amity.
33. Dissolve enmities.
34. Expect age.
35. Boast not of strength.
36. Confide not in wealth.
37. Be not weary of learning.
38. Be cautious of hazarding thyself.
39. Instruct the young.
40. Respect the aged.

41. Condole with the afflicted.

42. Be not troubled upon every occasion.

43. Promise never.

44. Be, in childhood, modest; in youth, temperate; in manhood, just; in old age, prudent.

45. Live pleasantly.

46. Die untroubled.

In these forty-six precepts, what is there that can justly require their authors to be treated with "general hatred and contempt"? Nothing. Yet we are told they were so treated. I do not doubt it, for the first, twenty-first, and forty-sixth, that is, "Understand what thou learnest," "Aim only at knowledge that may be acquired," "Die untroubled," which are perhaps three among the best in the selection, are quite enough to arouse the "hatred and contempt" of priests; and those whom the clergy hate, every body must, of course, hate. Deductions drawn from common sense and correct reasoning are, the clergy would fain make us believe, the most abominable sophistries; while they are endeavoring incessantly to force upon us mysteries, dreams, and faith, as sound and profound logic.

CHAPTER XXVI.

INFIDEL.—WASHINGTON.

INFIDEL is a word much used by the clergy of every denomination of religion. They use it as a reproach, and you must know the religious creed of him who uses the term, before you can determine whether you come under his ban or not; for if your creed does not agree with his creed, or if you have no creed, then you are of those by him proscribed. Many clergymen now pretend to narrow down their meaning of the word infidel to such as do not believe the existence of a God, and the immortality of the soul; yet they very liberally apply the term infidel to all deists, who certainly believe the existence of a God, and, most of them, the immortality of the soul; such deists as Hobbes, Blount, Toland, Tindal, Chubb, Lord Bolingbroke, Hume, Gibbon, William Godwin, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Voltaire, Rousseau, Condorcet, Volney, Frederic II. of Prussia, Franklin, Paine, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, &c.—men whose works and exertions in society have done and will continue to do, in my opinion, more towards happifying mankind, both morally and physically, than those of all the clergy that have existed on the earth during the last fifteen hundred years.

I am not one of those who think that because a man is good and wise, his opinion ought, without being submitted to the test of reason and common sense, to be taken as proof of the correctness of any subject, most particularly any position which involves a supposed error, or correct-

ness, in what is denominated religion; for I do not recollect that there ever has come to my notice any thing under the name of religion, no matter how ridiculous and irrational, which has not been embraced by some good and wise men. But as there are those who seem to think that, if they can only connect the name of some good and wise person with a position which they wish to establish or defend, then the proof in favor of such position is complete; and some such persons have, ever since the death of General Washington, claimed him to have been a professing Christian. I shall, in defence of truth, which the good of society requires, and of justice, which is due to the dead as well as to the living, endeavor to show his sentiments on what is called religion, so far as they were publicly known. The Rev. Dr. Wilson, of Albany, New York, preached a sermon, Sunday, October 23, 1831, to his congregation, in which he gave the religious character of every President of the United States, from Washington to Jackson, inclusive. The substance of that sermon was published in the Albany Daily Advertiser. Dr. Wilson's remarks on the character of Washington were, —

"Washington was a man of valor and wisdom. He was esteemed by the whole world as a great and good man; but he was not a professing Christian, at least not till after he was President. When the Congress sat in Philadelphia, President Washington attended the Episcopal church. The rector, Dr. Abercrombie, told me that on the days when the sacrament of the Lord's supper was to be administered, Washington's custom was to rise just before the ceremony commenced, and walk out of church. This became a subject of remark in the congregation, as setting a bad example. At length the doctor undertook to speak of it, with a direct allusion to the President. Washington was heard

afterwards to remark that this was the first time a clergyman had thus preached to him, and he should henceforth neither trouble the doctor nor his congregation on such occasions; and ever after that, upon communion days, he absented himself altogether from the church."

In November following the above publication, Mr. Robert Dale Owen passed through Albany on his way to Indiana; and in a letter dated Albany, November 13, 1831, to Amos Gilbert, which letter was published in New York, December 3, 1831, by Mr. Gilbert, he says, —

"I called last evening on Dr. Wilson, as I told you I should, and I have seldom derived more pleasure from a short interview with any one. Unless my discernment of character has been grievously at fault, I met an honest man and sincere Christian. But you shall have the particulars. A gentleman of this city accompanied me to the doctor's residence. We were very courteously received, and found him a tall, commanding figure, with a countenance of much benevolence, and a brow indicative of deep thought, apparently approaching fifty years of age. I opened the interview by stating, that though personally a stranger to him, I had taken the liberty of calling in consequence of having perused an interesting sermon of his, which had been reported in the Daily Advertiser of this city, and regarding which, as he probably knew, a variety of opinions prevailed. In a discussion, in which I had taken a part, some of the facts, as there reported, had been questioned; and I wished to know from him whether the reporter had fairly given his words, or not. 'I especially allude,' I added, 'to the evidence which regarded Washington's scepticism.'

"'I will willingly furnish,' he replied, 'such information as I possess. May I be allowed to ask to whom I have the pleasure of speaking?' 'Certainly. My name is Owen.

'Robert Dale Owen?' 'The same.' Perhaps a slight cloud passed over the good man's countenance, and there was a certain hesitation in his reply; but if so, the shadow was but of a moment. His brow cleared, and he soon proceeded in the same mild, collected manner as before. 'Mr. Owen, I cannot be ignorant why the question is asked me. I know what is gained to your cause by substantiating the scepticism of Washington. But truth is truth, whether it makes for us or against us. The cause to which I have devoted my life cannot be injured by the dissemination of truth.' 'Dr. Wilson,' said I, 'we differ in opinion on some subjects; but let me at the least assure you that I respect the principle which induced you to say what you have just said, and that I honor the honesty which every man of common discernment must see dictated the sermon to which I have alluded. I hope that under similar circumstances, I myself shall ever act as candid a part.' The doctor bowed: 'It is pleasant to me to have my motives fairly judged, especially when it is so easy for party purposes to misrepresent them.' I again alluded to the sermon, and he said that if I would read to him any particular portion of it, as reported, he would inform me at once whether it was correctly given or not. I then read to him, from a copy of the Daily Advertiser, the paragraph which regards Washington, beginning, 'Washington was a man,' &c., and ending, 'absented himself altogether from the church.' 'I indorse,' said Dr. Wilson, with emphasis, '*every word of that.* Nay, I do not wish to conceal from you any part of the truth, even what I have not given to the public. Dr. Abercrombie said more than I have repeated.' At the close of our conversation on the subject, his emphatic expression was, — for I well remember the very words, — '*Sir, Washington was a deist!* Now, Mr. Owen, I have diligently perused

every line that Washington ever gave to the public, and I do not find an expression in which he pledges himself as a professor of Christianity. I think any man who will candidly do as I have done, will come to the conclusion that he was a deist, and nothing more. I do not take upon me to say positively that he was, but that is my opinion.' 'It has been mine, doctor, for some time; and I have been not a little abused for expressing it. I am the more pleased, therefore, to find confirmation from so respectable a source.' Dr. Wilson then adverted to the fact, already published in Jefferson's Memoirs, that the clergy, in an address to Washington, endeavored, but in vain, to draw out his opinions touching the Christian religion."

CHAPTER XXVII.

WORSHIP. — CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

Is it not strange that good and wise persons should ever have imbibed the idea, that an infinitely wise, infinitely powerful, and infinitely good, and, of course, infinitely happy being, if there be such a being, requires any beings, much less beings which he himself had made, to worship him? Can finite beings, by their worship, make infinity more infinite, or, by the default of such worship, lessen infinity? The idea of worship originated in fear. Self-protection and defence is a just law of nature, but, like every other good, has been, and is most shamefully perverted. The strong and the crafty, instead of merely protecting themselves,

have frequently used their strength and craft to subject and oppress their fellow-beings, by exacting from them obsequiousness, amounting, at least in form, to worship; and those who are the most ready to subserve tyranny and injustice, become favorites with these oppressors, while such as are less tractable are oftentimes unjustly and tyrannically punished. And to render this adulation habitual, and to insure its continuance, certain ceremonies and fine expressions and titles are invented; the omission, or what may be considered, by the assumed expounder, an improper application of any of these, is most rigorously punished. The fear of such punishments made the mass conform to the exactions of rulers and priests, until habit rendered it apparently natural. Now, an infinite being cannot entertain any such motives. He cannot be afraid of losing any of his power. There is no power any where that can diminish it; nor can his happiness, by any act or omission of ours, be either advanced or retarded, augmented or diminished. Of course, our words and acts towards him, if he notices them at all, must be noticed with indifference. That a being infinitely wise and infinitely good will, or ever did, either grant or withhold any thing, because he was asked or prayed so to do, I do not believe. Ask what we may, it is either right or it is wrong that we should have it. If right, such a being would certainly give it, whether asked or not; if wrong, he certainly would not grant it, though ever so earnestly asked or prayed so to do.

It is in just systems of civil government that mankind will find an improvement, a continual advancement towards perfection, in their physical and moral condition; therefore one honest, well-informed, talented, and active politician is of more intrinsic value to society than all the clergy and systems of religion that can be instituted. In the letter of

Mr. Owen which I have quoted, recounting the conversation which took place between Dr. Wilson and himself, he relates the following: —

"Mr. Owen," said Dr. Wilson in continuation, "having gone so far, I wish distinctly to explain to you why I have taken the course which in the sermon in question I have taken. I believe, firmly and honestly, in the authenticity of the Bible. I believe in the efficacy of its doctrines to save the world. I believe in the vast importance of its being recognized by the nation as a guide of conduct. It is not so recognized at present; it never will be so recognized, so long as infidels ——" The doctor hesitated. "I speak plainly, Mr. Owen, and hope I give no offence." I smiled. "You need not fear, Dr. Wilson; nothing you are saying will offend me." "Well, then, to speak the unvarnished truth, I see plainly that the Bible never will be recognized as the nation's guide so long as infidels are its rulers. Since its very commencement as a republic, infidels have been its rulers; and here we may see the true cause why, at this moment, the Bible is comparatively set aside by the nation. I wish to show that this has been the cause, and that while the cause continues, the effect will continue also. This is my reason for taking the course I have done, and incurring reproach in consequence."

In the sermon of Dr. Wilson herein before quoted, he says, —

"When the war was over, and the victory over our enemies won, and the blessings and happiness of liberty and peace were secured, the constitution was framed, and God was neglected. He was not merely forgotten — he was absolutely voted out of the constitution. The proceedings, as published by Thompson, the secretary, and the history of the day, show that the question was gravely

debated in Congress, whether God should be in the constitution or not; and after a solemn debate he was deliberately voted out of it." "The men whose arguments swayed to vote God out of the constitution, to declare that there should be no religious test, that Congress should make no law to establish religion, &c., were atheists in principle. They had also their own ambitious ends in view — were worldly-minded men; they sought for worldly honors and distinctions. Some of them were deists — blasphemers of the Son of God — of the stamp of Tom Paine, in his Age of Reason, or blind Palmer. They would therefore neither acknowledge nor honor him or his religion." "There is not only in the theory of your government no recognition of God's laws and sovereignty; but its practical operation, its administration, has been conformable to its theory. Those who have been called to administer the government have not been men making any public profession of Christianity." "Having noticed all the Presidents, I may remark," said the preacher, "that were we to look into the other departments of the general and state governments, and among the members of Congress, we should find the same deplorable disregard of religion among them. I am told that Mr. Frelinghuysen, the worthy senator from New Jersey, states that out of all the members of the two houses of last Congress he could only find seven who were willing to join him in the prayer meetings."

If the statements here made by this seemingly honest clergyman be correct, or nearly approaching the truth, they show conclusively that we ought to commit, and to continue in all time to come, our government to the management of infidels; for, according to Dr. Wilson's testimony, it has been principally managed by infidels more than sixty years; and it is certain that no other government on earth has so im-

proved the physical and moral condition of its own citizens, and contributed so much to the enlightenment of mankind in general, as has this government, said to be all that time under the management of infidels, while in other countries the government is principally managed, if not altogether controlled, by what is called religion, where religion is established by law, where the clergy, who are the expounders of religion, are paid by the government at the expense of the people, and where the clergy deceive the people and render them subservient to unjust and tyrannical government.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CONVENTION THAT MADE THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION.

We have in the proceedings of the Convention that framed the constitution of the United States corroborative evidence of the correctness of Dr. Wilson's opinions, representing that our republican government has always been chiefly under the management of infidels. It has been frequently, within the last ten or twelve years, from the pulpit and from the stump, by clergymen and by demagogues,* who always tread close at the heels of the clergy,

* I use the word demagogue as defined by Bailey, old English authority, and not as defined by Webster. Bailey defines it, "The head of a faction; a ringleader of the rabble; a popular and factious orator." Walker and Johnson both say, "A leader of the rabble." Webster defines it, "A leader of the people; an orator who pleases the populace, and influences them to adhere to him." The people are influenced by

declared that when that Convention had been in session about four weeks there had been no progress made in its business; that the members thereof became agitated, got into confusion, and would have broken up without having accomplished any thing, but that a proposition was made and acceded to to open the proceedings of the Convention thereafter every morning with prayer, which, according to the assertions of those ignorant or hypocritical orators, was done; and that, after that step was taken, every thing went smoothly. With respect to the Convention's adopting the ceremony of prayer, the statement is destitute of truth. When the Convention had been in session about four weeks Dr. Franklin did propose that the Convention thereafter should every morning be opened with prayer; but the proposition was not voted on, and therefore died a natural death; and no attempt was made to revive it. This proposition was made by a deist, Dr. Franklin. Of course, so far as he was concerned, the prayers would not have been addressed to the Bible God. General Washington, whom the clergy are so fond of claiming as a zealous Christian, was president of that Convention; yet it does not appear that he at any time said a word in favor of the proposal. In Franklin's Works, Sparks's edition, Note by Dr. Franklin — "The Convention, except three or four persons, thought prayers unnecessary."

The constitution of the United States is the most valuable work ever accomplished by man, so far as we have

that which they believe to be right; the rabble are governed by their factious passions, without much regard to right or wrong. An orator may please the people and induce them to follow him, and not be a demagogue; for he may be laboring in the cause of truth and justice, and the people may be pleased with him, and sustain him; yet he that is laboring in the cause of truth and justice is certainly no demagogue.

knowledge of the proceedings of mankind. It is the agent which has commenced the emancipation of all nations from those tyrannic chains with which kingcraft and priestcraft have bound and oppressed them at least fifteen hundred years; and it will finally accomplish that great and glorious work; and yet this invaluable boon was framed, completed, and presented to mankind without public prayer, and by men who "thought prayers unnecessary."

Every friend to the physical and moral improvement of mankind will feel pleasure in knowing the names of the members of the Convention that framed and completed the constitution of the United States, and where they were from. Rufus King, Nathaniel Gorham, Caleb Strong, Elbridge Gerry, Massachusetts; Robert Yates, Alexander Hamilton, John Lansing, Jr., New York; David Brearly, William Churchill Houston, Governor Livingston, Jonathan Dayton, New Jersey; Robert Morris, Thomas Fitzsimmons, James Wilson, Gouverneur Morris, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Mifflin, George Clymer, Jared Ingersoll, Pennsylvania; George Read, Richard Basset, Jacob Brown, Gunning Bedford, Jr., John Dickinson, Delaware; James McHenry, Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer, Daniel Carroll, Luther Martin, John Francis Merser, Maryland; George Washington, (president of the Convention,) John Blair, George Mason, James Madison, Jr., Edmond Randolph, George Wythe, James McClurg, Virginia; Alexander Martin, William Richardson Davie, Hugh Williamson, William Blount, North Carolina; John Rutledge, Charles Cotesworth Pinkney, Charles Pinkney, Pierce Butler, South Carolina; William Few, William Pierce, William Houston, Abraham Baldwin, Georgia; John Langdon, Nicholas Gilman, New Hampshire; Roger Sherman, William Samuel Johnson, Connecticut.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE CLERGY IN CIVIL GOVERNMENTS.

In all civil governments established by the people for the benefit of the whole people there is one influence that should be particularly guarded against; that is, religious, or clerical, influence. That influence has always been, by some means or other, introduced into every government, and in most instances assumed the control thereof; and it ever will be so, until the agents and representatives of the people become honest, candid, and virtuous enough to check the arrogance and to set aside the usurpations of the clergy. Mr. Jefferson, in a letter to Major John Cartwright, dated June 5, 1824, says, —

"I was glad to find in your book a formal contradiction at length of the judiciary usurpation of legislative powers; for such the judges have usurped in their repeated decisions, that Christianity is a part of the common law. The proof of the contrary which you have adduced is incontrovertible; to wit, that the common law existed while the Anglo-Saxons were yet pagans, at a time when they had never yet heard the name of Christ pronounced, or knew that such a character had ever existed. But it may amuse you to show when and by what means they stole the law in upon us. In a case of *quare impedit* in the Year Book 34 H. 6, folio 38, (anno 1458,) a question was made, how far the ecclesiastical law was to be respected in a common law court. And Prisot, chief justice, gives his opinion in these words: 'A tiel leis qu'ils de seint eglise ont en

ancien scripture covient à nous à donner credence; car ceo common ley sur quels touts manners leis sont fondés. Et auxy, sir, nous sumus oblègés de conustre lour ley de saint eglise: et semblablement ils sont obligés de conustre nostre ley. Et, sir, si poit apperer or à nous que l'evesque ad fait come un ordinary fera en tiel cas, adong nous devons ceo adjuger bon, ou auterment nemy,' &c. See S. C. Fitzh. Abr. Qu. imp. 89. Bro.; Abr. Qu. imp. 12. Finch, in his first book, c. 3, is the first afterwards who quotes this case, and mistakes it thus: 'To such laws of the church as have warrant in holy scripture our law giveth credence;' and cites Prisot, mistranslating 'ancien scripture' into 'holy scripture.' Whereas Prisot palpably says, 'To such laws as those of holy church have in ancient writing it is proper for us to give credence;' to wit, to their ancient written laws. This was in 1613, a century and a half after the dictum of Prisot. Wingate, in 1658, erects this false translation into a maxim of common law, copying the words of Finch, but citing Prisot. Wing. Max. 3. And Sheppard, title 'Religion,' in 1675, copies the same mistranslation, quoting the Y. B. Finch and Wingate. Hale expresses it in these words: 'Christianity is parcel of the laws of England.' 1 Ventr. 293. 3 Keb. 607. But he quotes no authority. By these echoings and reëchoings from one to another it had become so established in 1728 that, in case the King *vs.* Woolston,* 2 Stra. 834, the court would not suffer it to be debated, whether to write against Christianity was punishable in the temporal courts at common law. Wood, therefore, 409, ventures still to

* This Woolston here spoken of by Mr. Jefferson was an English divine, Thomas Woolston. He was sentenced to imprisonment for publishing a work which the court, from ignorance, or hypocrisy, termed blasphemous. He died in prison in 1733.

vary the phrase, and say that all blasphemy and profaneness are offences by the common law, and cites 2 Stra. Then Blackstone, in 1763, 4. 59, repeats the words of Hale, that 'Christianity is part of laws of England,' citing Ventris and Strange. And finally, Lord Mansfield, with a little qualification, in Evans's case, in 1767, says that 'the essential principles of revealed religion are part of the common law.' Thus ingulfing Bible, Testament, and all, into the common law, without citing any authority. And thus we find this chain of authorities hanging link by link, one upon another, and all ultimately on one and the same book, and that a mistranslation of the words 'ancien scripture' used by Prisot. Finch quotes Prisot; Wingate does the same. Sheppard quotes Prisot, Finch, and Wingate. Hale cites nobody. The court in Woolston's case cite Hale. Wood cites Woolston's case. Blackstone quotes Woolston's case and Hale. And Lord Mansfield, like Hale, ventures on his own authority. Here I might defy the best read lawyer to produce another scrip of authority for this judiciary forgery; and I might go on further to show how some of the Anglo-Saxon priests interpolated into the texts of Alfred's laws 20th, 21st, 22d, and 23d chapters of Exodus, and the 15th of the Acts of the Apostles, from the 23d to the 29th verse. But this would lead my pen and your patience too far. What a conspiracy this between church and state! Sing Tantarara, rogues all, rogues all! sing Tantarara, rogues all!"

This quotation from Mr. Jefferson shows some of the trickery and manœuvring of the clergy for hundreds of years past. In late years, the same trickery and manœuvring has produced abolitionism, free soilism, higher lawism, anti-Nebraska billism, and every other ism that has been thrown into politics to embarrass the just proceedings of

our government; for these isms are nothing more than the scum of the effervescence of clerical wrath against progress in government, and the consequent advancement of reason, independence, and virtue, in the mass of mankind; which progress and advancement they well know would soon dispense with their impositions. When that is done, they may become useful citizens, by following some honest employment; those that are well educated may teach youths real science and correct morals, yet they may not find that as easy a task as teaching creeds; for Locke says, "It is easier to believe than to be scientifically instructed."

CHAPTER XXX.

THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT.

Since the establishment of the American constitutional government, American commerce has become extended to every part of what is called the civilized world, and the emigration from most of the nations to the United States is large, so that the intercourse between the Americans and the subjects of these nations has become frequent and extensive, and by that intercourse the subjects of some of these nations, particularly Great Britain, France, and Germany, have become as well acquainted with the principles of justice and the rights of society, and what is necessary to sustain them, as were the inhabitants of the British colonies, at the time they threw off the old state and church tyranny. But they are not so favorably circumstanced as were the Americans; they are not divided into a number

of small states, each independent of the others in its domestic regulations, but willing to confederate with each other for self-defence, and the establishment of justice, right, and liberty, as were the American colonies. France has made several unsuccessful attempts to establish a government for the people, by the people; and unsuccessful they will be, so long as they attempt to establish a consolidated government. If that country was divided into about twelve — not less than eight — compact states, each independent of the other as to its domestic regulations, and would then form a union for self-defence and external regulations, taking the American constitution as their model, they would find but little difficulty in becoming a self-governed people.

The same may be said of Great Britain and other large countries. If England, Scotland, and Wales were divided into about seven compact states, and Ireland into about three, then, by forming a union, and taking the American constitution as a model, the people of that country would soon become a self-governed and happy people. But, unfortunately for mankind, these two powerful nations are each governed by a consolidated state and church tyranny. And from present appearances, there is but little hope that the people of either can obtain their rights but by rising *en masse*, and at the point of the bayonet put down their present unjust and oppressive government; and when that is done, they ought not to attempt, if they wish to secure their liberty, to form a consolidated government. But before they attempt to form a civil government, let them divide their nation into states, as before mentioned, and then proceed on the principle herein before recommended, and a solid foundation will be laid, on which they may securely seat Justice and Virtue, the parents of Happiness.

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